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No. 154.

## KISSING ON THE SLY.

BY ARNOLD ISLER.

Waste as you will your hours of leisure,  
You young folks, low and high,  
No doubt you all have some sweet pleasure,  
On which you do rely—  
But there is nothing half so pleasant—  
That is to Jane and I—  
When we know there is no one present,  
As, "kissing on the sly."  
Now, Jane's mother does not believe in  
This "kissing on the sly."  
She thinks young men are so deceiving,  
Girls ought to be more shy!  
But Jane, like me, can't see the harm in  
(When no one else is nigh),  
Kissin', oh! it is so charming,  
This "kissing on the sly."  
Sides, Jane and I have many reasons  
For "kissing on the sly."  
'Tis just as good in all the seasons,  
Be seasons wet or dry.  
It don't play out like other pleasures,  
Nor need we to apply  
To any keen and severe measures,  
For "kissing on the sly."  
When Jane's mother is down the cellar,  
And no one else is nigh,  
Jane looks roguishly at her fellow,  
Meaning, "How is this for high?"  
While I, you see, draw somewhat nearer  
To this young maid so shy.  
For well I know that naught can cheer her,  
Like "kissing on the sly."  
Time passes fast; Jane and I soon will be  
Tied together by that tie  
Called the wedding knot, but we'll still be  
Innocently Jane and I;  
And though some of life's joys may perish  
As the years go gliding by,  
Yet there is one we'll ever cherish—  
'Tis "kissing on the sly."

## Rocky Mountain Rob, THE CALIFORNIA OUTLAW; OR, The Vigilantes of Humbug Bar.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

AUTHOR OF "THE WOLF DEMON," "OVERLAND  
KIT," "RED MAZEPPA," "ACE OF SPADES,"  
"HEART OF FIRE," "WITCHES OF  
NEW YORK," "A STRANGER  
GIRL," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER VII.

JIM'S WOOING.

BESSIE'S heart beat fast, and the hot blood came surging to her cheeks, as she felt the slight pressure of York's arm around her waist, and his warm breath fanned her cheek. The girl would freely have given almost any thing that she possessed to have been well out of the scrape; but, retreat now was impossible. She had courted the question and must answer it. York was not a man to be trifled with.

"Come, Bessie, I've asked you a question; arn't you going to answer it?" he said, in his low, deep voice.

"A question, Jim?" she murmured, in confusion.

"Yes; you know well enough what I mean. Don't pretend to misunderstand me; you're too smart a girl to try that dodge. Give me a straight answer. Don't play with me. Folks say, Bessie, that I am not the kind of a man that a wise head would take for a plaything. It would be like playing with edged tools; handle carefully, or there might be cut fingers round the board."

"But, Jim, I don't know much about you," the girl stammered.

"Well, I don't know much about you, either," he coolly rejoined. "So we are even there; but, for my part, I'm willing to go it blind. I don't think that if your worthy father, old Pop Shook, asked for a certificate of character from my Sunday-school teacher, I could give it to him. I couldn't even produce the register of baptism to prove that my name is really Jim York; but, I can put down ounces of gold-dust with any two-legged critter from here to Bannock city. What my past life has been is nobody's business. In this region we don't question a man's past life. If he calls himself John Smith, John Smith he is without question. I own two-thirds of the Waste-water Gulch strike, as rich a 'lead' as there is north of Bannock, and I don't take a back seat for a man in the Humbug valley. I love you, Bess, and I want you. I ain't a man that gives way much to sentiment; 'tain't in my nature. I've dealt the cards just as coolly when all my pile was up as when I was playing for a broken-down mule. I am not generally blind, either, and I've had some little experience with women in the old time, before I emigrated for my country's good, and wore store-clothes and a billed shirt on Broadway. You have acted as if you cared something for me, and wanted me to know it. Now, Bess, spit it out; don't dodge the question; are you mine, or have I jumped another man's claim?"

The cheeks of the girl glowed like a furnace, and her breath came thick and fast. Despite the matter-of-fact tone of York and his careless words, there was an undercurrent of passion perceptible that frightened the girl. The volcano was crested over by the lava coat, but the fires still burned fiercely beneath. She feared to rouse the volcano's might.

"Well, Jim, I didn't expect this," she murmured.

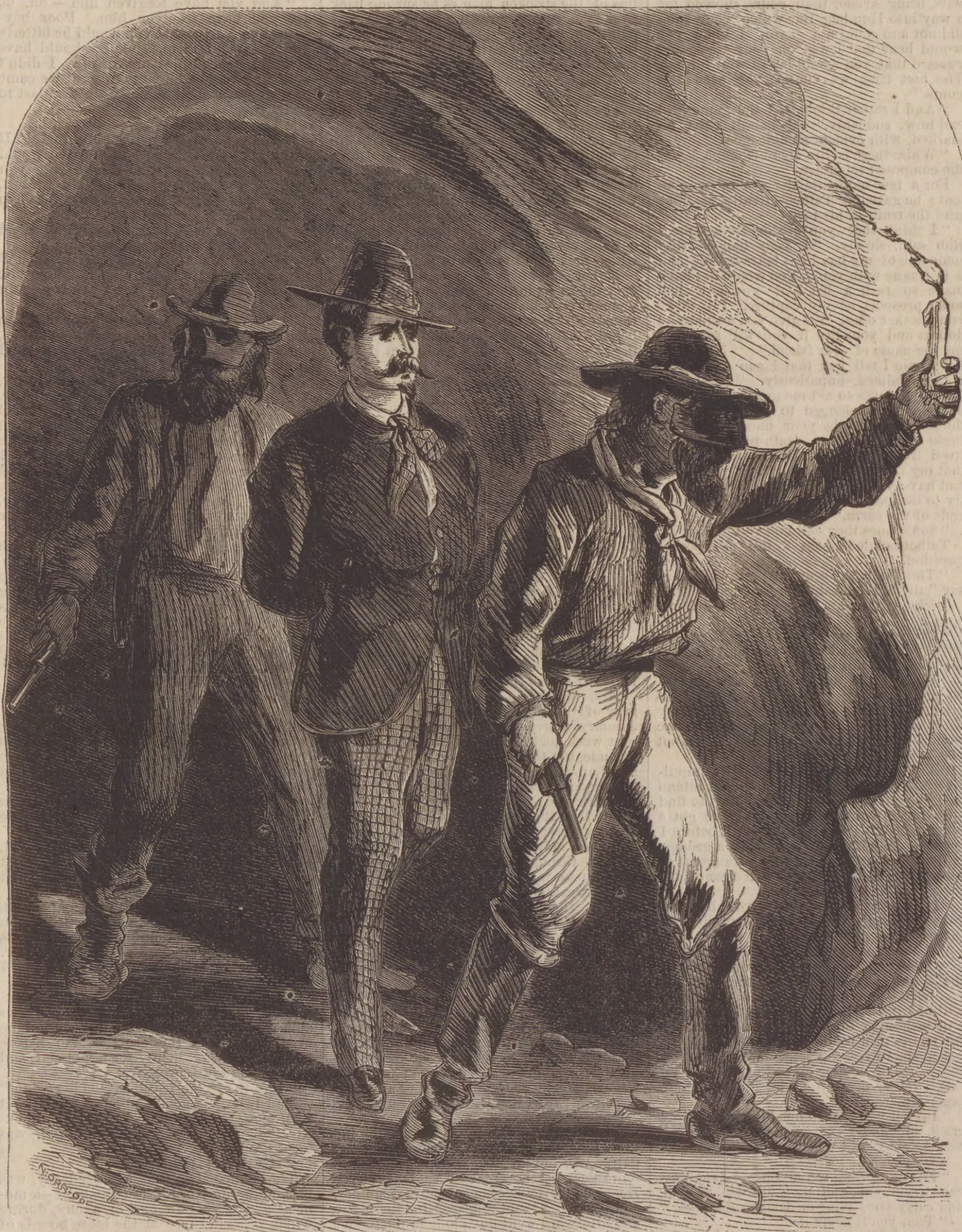
"Oh, you didn't?"

It was only a simple sentence, but the intonation gave the lie to the girl as directly as though it had been framed in words.

"I mean that I didn't expect it so soon," she stammered, in confusion.

"Oh!"

The little exclamation was given with so



Through a narrow winding passage, a natural gallery in the rock, the three proceeded.

much contempt that it wounded the girl more deeply than a torrent of bitter words would have done.

"Now, don't be angry with me, Jim," she said, imploringly, and the red cheeks grew pale, while an anxious expression appeared upon her face.

"Bess, I started out to play a square game with you, but you've rung a 'cold deal' in on me right at the jump," he said, bitterly.

"Why, Jim, I haven't," she said, reproachfully.

"Yes, you have, too," he answered, quickly; "you've been after me ever since I came to the Bar, and now that you got me foul, you pretend that you don't know any thing about it. Just answer me one question, though."

"I will, if I can," the girl said, humbly.

"Is there any man here that you do love?"

"Well, I—why do you ask such a question?"

"Because I'd send him to eat his hash where he wouldn't need a fire to keep him warm!" York said, with savage earnestness.

The girl grew paler still.

"But, Jim, I don't love any one at all."

"It's well that you don't," York said, meaningly. "Now, Bess, I like you, with all your nonsense, and I've made up my mind to have you. I feel pretty sure that you like me now better than any one else, and when you do make up your mind to it, you'll love me. You can't fool with me as you have with the soft-heads that you've made game of ever since you came to the Bar. You've tried once too often, and this time your 'hand' ain't worth much, and I'm going to rake in the stakes myself. I'll treat you like a lady, dress you up like a princess, and maybe, some day, I'll take you East, and let you shine in the New York palaces. Diamonds won't look bad in your golden hair, my pet, and you shall have 'em, big enough, too, to make the New York 'sharps' turn pale with envy. I've got the 'open sesame' that shall split the rock, society, and give us entrance.

My gold-dust will blind 'em. Why, gold will buy every thing in New York, from the judge on the bench down to the boot-black."

The girl was startled by the fiery energy of York's words; there was a new phase of the gambler's character.

"Why, Jim, how you talk!" she murmured. She was fascinated despite herself. It was the charm of the serpent that binds the bird. Over her senses crept a strange lethargic feeling; her breath came short and fast; her bosom rose and fell tumultuously; her face burned and her heart beat like one in a dream, she permitted York to wind his arms around and draw her tightly to his breast; kiss after kiss he pressed upon her soft lips, still she resisted not. She was under a spell. The dominant nature had triumphed over the weaker one.

"You are mine!" he muttered, in triumph. "I press my seal of love upon your lips, and I defy man or devil to tear you from me."

Her senses reeling with strange passions, her head sunk down upon his shoulder; she was almost helpless, weak as a child.

Long and lovingly York looked upon the fair face nestled on his shoulder. The better angel of the man seemed to have taken possession of him, and the dark-winged messengers of fraud and rapine were for the time forced to fly.

One little glimpse of clear sunlight amid the clouded sky of Jim York's lawless life.

Then into that little dining-room, putting to flight the angels of peace and love, and bringing wrath and discord, came old Pop Shook.

Old Pop's naturally red face grew redder still when he beheld his treasure in the arms of Jim York, the gambler. He uttered an oath, which made it plainly evident that the host of the Waterproof saloon was fearfully excited.

With a slight scream, Bessie essayed to escape from the embrace of York, but, with a strong arm, he restrained her, and looked with calmness into the face of the angry father.

"Look a-here, York, what does this mean?" the old man cried, unable to keep still, and dancing about like a turkey on a hot plate.

"Well, Pop, I should think the position that your daughter occupies just now wouldn't call for much explanation."

"What have you been saying to my gal?"

"Just what you said to her mother a good many years ago," York replied, coolly.

"What!" the old man fairly screamed; "and, Bess, do you love this fellow—this gambler—this rascal!"

"Hold on!" York cried, quickly, in his clear, cold tones; "don't call names. It ain't for me to quarrel with you just now. As for my character, I guess it's about as good as any other man's in these diggings; and if it ain't, I'll just strike a new 'lead' an' make it as good. I love this girl, and she cares more for me than she does for any one else. I'm going to have her, with your consent, I hope, but have her anyway, if she's willing, if every man for forty miles around said no. That's my hand, Pop, and I always play my cards for all they're worth. Just talk this matter over and I'll see you again."

Then York released the girl and quitted the house, leaving old Shook in speechless amazement.

### CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRICE OF A WHITE SQUAW.

FOR full five minutes the old man glared around him, his mouth open and his face scarlet, while Bessie stood tremblingly before him; but, at last, he found his tongue.

"Bessie, I'd rather see you laid out in your grave-clothes than to see you the wife of that rascal!" he cried.

"Oh, father, don't be angry with me!" she exclaimed, her eyes full of tears; then she sunk down in a chair and began to sob as if her heart would break.

"Why, Bess, how can you think of this fellow for a minute?" the old man asked, his anger cooling down at the sight of her grief.

"Oh, I don't know!" she moaned, between her sobs.

"Why, gal, he's a disgrace to the Bar; a cool, clear-headed scoundrel. That ain't an honest man in the Humbug valley that likes him. He ain't got no friends; he's only a card-sharp at the best."

"He owns the Waste-water gulch mine," protested the girl.

"Well, I don't dispute that; he's got two partners, Kangaroo and Bill Rackensack though; they run the mine; he don't sile his dainty white hands much; he'd rather sleep all day and gamble all night."

"But, Doc Kidder gambles too," Bessie persisted. She knew that Kidder was a particular friend of her father.

"Yes, but he ain't like York; he's a gentleman, he is. He couldn't run a mine if he wanted to; his health ain't good. But he's a good squar' man. He don't cheat and he plays a fair game. He don't ring any greeny into a leetle game, and then rake him for all he's worth. He don't play keards with a revolver on the table and another one in his lap. Why, gal, of the Vigilantes ever get started in this hyer town, they'll string up that Jim York and his gang just as sure as the Wisdom runs into the Missouri."

"I know that people don't like him," she confessed, drying her eyes on her apron.

"And that's the reason that you do; that's a woman all over. Your mother couldn't b'ar the sight of me till her old man said that she shouldn't have me and drove me out of the house with a hoss-whip; and arter that time she made up her mind fur to have me anyway, jist to spite him. Now, I ain't a-going to be as big a fool as he was. You kin have the man ef you want to; you've got to live with him, not me. But, ef you do have him, jist make him pull up stakes and git, 'cos I should hate to have to string him up to a pine some day, seeing that he was my darter's husband."

"But, father, I haven't married him, yet."

"Well, you'd better, 'fore long, or there'll be some nice stories 'round about you. S'pose anybody else had come in and caught you a-hugging of him."

"Why, father, I wasn't!"

"Well, he was you; same thing; 'tain't much difference." Old Pop was getting bitter. "You kin do jist as you please; I ain't a-going to lift a finger to stop you. I know that I couldn't ef I wanted to, and I ain't a-going to try. Jist go your own gait, but don't say that I didn't tell you, ef you marry him and wake up some fine morning and find your husband swinging with a rope round his neck from a pine tree with the warning of the Vigilantes pinned onto his breast."

The girl shuddered at the thought.

"I won't have any thing more to say to him, father." She spoke with spirit and firmness.

"That's right," the father said, approvingly. "That ain't any good in that cuss, and the sooner he gits out of the valley the better it will be for the Bar. We've got altogether too many scamps here now. A man with two ounces of gold-dust ain't safe arter dark any more. I reckon that the Vigilantes will call on Judge Lynch to take a hand in the game and purify this town afore long if things get much worse than they are now."

"Do you think that a Vigilance Committee will be got up, father?"

"Jist as sure as shootin', gal," he replied, decidedly. "Things can't go on this way much longer. Poor Jimmy Collins was killed last night; jist knocked on the head for the sake of the few ounces of dust that he had with him, and one of the 'Johns' up near the Chinese camp was shot dead not a hundred paces from the main trail down the Wisdom."

"Perhaps 'twas Rocky Mountain Rob's road-agents that did it," suggested Bess.

"'Tain't likely; they go for the coaches and the express stuff—don't trouble the mines much; ef they did, it wouldn't be long afore we'd make the country too hot to hold 'em. Ef the Vigilantes do get their hands in they may clean out these fellows up in the mountains too."

"Oh, my!" and the girl sprung suddenly to her feet, "I'm letting those eggs be cooked all to rags!" and she proceeded to remove them from the fire.

"Who did you cook those for?"

"Jim York," she replied.

"Well, put 'em away and keep 'em; somebody may come in and want 'em," said the provident Shook.

"Big engine eat eggs," said a guttural voice from the doorway.

Old Shook and the girl turned and beheld the Indian chief, known as Mud Turtle, standing in the passage. He was wrapped to the chin as usual in his dirty red blanket.

The Indian was no stranger to either father or daughter, for during the last few days he had been a constant patron of the Waterproof saloon. His visits, though, had been more frequent at the bar, where the fragrant fire-water was dispensed, than to the eating department of Bob Shook's hotel.

"Want something to eat, I s'pose, chief?" Shook asked.

"Ugh! Pale-face barefooted on top of his head, speaks straight. Big chief—Mud Turtle—eat heap now, pretty soon, bime-by."

"Sit down in the other room, Injun; I reckon you kin pay for what you want?" Shook's motto was, no trust.

"Chief no pay, no eat," the Indian observed, with dignity.



"That's correct! Bess, just fix something for the Injun."

The chief stalked into the dining-room and sat down at one of the little tables; Shook followed, while Bessie prepared the ham and eggs.

The Indian looked at Shook stolidly but so steadily that the old man's attention was arrested and he guessed that the Indian wished to speak to him.

So when Bessie brought in the ham and eggs, and placed them on the table, Old Shook drew a chair up and sat down opposite to the Indian, as Bessie retired to the kitchen.

The chief surveyed the eatables, gave a grunt of satisfaction and proceeded to dispatch them. Then, his hunger satisfied, he wiped his mouth on his blanket, leaned over the table and laid his finger impressively on Shook's arm.

"Me, Mud Turtle in pale-face camp—drink fire-water—sleep anywhere—play poker—more white man than Injun."

"Yes," Shook assented.

"When chief goes north he wakes up; his tribe call him O-wa-he; he lead the Blackfoot braves on the war-path, and the scalp of the Crows hang thick in his wig-wam."

"Is that so, chief?" Old Pop wondered what the savage was driving at.

"Mud Turtle—white Injun—is a skunk who drinks fire-water and lies. O-wa-he, Blackfoot chief, would not lie to save his life. His barefooted-on-top-of-head father has pretty squaw—the chief's lodge by the great river, far off is cold—the chief wants squaw with eyes like sky."

To say that the old tavern-keeper was astounded would be but to faintly express it.

"What! give my gal to you?" he exclaimed, breathlessly and with open mouth, half-rising to his feet.

"No give, chief buy squaw," the Blackfoot replied, with dignity; "give white father one pony, two squaws, bag gold-dust, and the savage produced a buck-skin bag holding perhaps half a pound of dust, and opening it, exposed the yellow grains to the gaze of the old man, whose first impulse was to get angry, but a single glance at the face of his guest convinced him that the chief was in sober earnest and was conscious of no wrong in offering to buy the white maiden."

Then the ridiculousness of the offer struck him, and he roared with laughter, somewhat to the Indian's amazement. He watched Old Pop's face very narrowly, mentally calculating if he had bid high enough for the white squaw.

#### CHAPTER IX.

##### THE OUTLAWS "AT HOME."

ONWARD through the narrow passage for a hundred yards or more went Talbot and his capturers; then suddenly came a halt. The bandage was removed, and Talbot looked around him, to see, as he had guessed, that he was in the cavern of the outlaw. The report then was true which said that the road-agents had a treasure-house in the mountains which served also as a refuge from pursuit in time of danger.

It was a natural cavern, lit up now by fallow candles stuck round upon the rocks, and no crevice appeared in the roof through which the daylight might penetrate. All was black as ink, except where the flickering light of the sputtering candles flared out from the rocky walls.

The chamber in which he was now (for Talbot guessed at once that the cavern branched here and there through the rock, as is common with such freaks of the earthquake's giant force) was some thirty feet long by twenty wide. At its further end rose some rock, pulpit fashion, over which a buffalo-robe was spread, and on the robe sat a dark-bearded man, armed to the teeth, and clad in the wild garb of the mountains, wearing a black half-mask, through which shone glittering eyes.

From the description which he had heard given of the man, Talbot at once recognized Rocky Mountain Rob, the merciless outlaw.

By Talbot's side were two of the bearded men who had aided in his capture. The upper parts of their faces were also concealed by black masks like the one worn by their leader.

Their prisoner took in the situation at a glance. He was helpless in the hands of those who had every reason to take his life and none to spare it. But he wondered why he had not been stricken to death in the mountain gorges—why had all this trouble been taken to bring him a prisoner to this stronghold?

"Here we are, captain, with our bird," said one of the ruffians by Dick's side. He spoke in a hoarse voice, evidently disguised.

The person seated upon the buffalo-robe nodded and seemed for a few minutes to be engaged in surveying Dick; then at last he spoke.

"You are Dick Talbot, the sport from Bannock?" the masked man said, in a low voice, evidently disguised.

"Yes," Dick replied, with his usual confident air. "I'm that very individual."

The moment the outlaw spoke, Dick became certain that he had heard the voice before.

"You made a rather foolish bet in Bannock city, the other day, if I have been rightly informed," the outlaw continued.

"I have made quite a number of foolish bets in my time," was Talbot's careless reply.

"But none as foolish as this one, or you would not be here now to say so. You bet a thousand dollars that you would bring the road-agent, Rocky Mountain Rob, alive or dead, into Bannock city, did you not?"

"Just what I did say."

"It was a stupid thing not only to put up a thousand dollars against an equal sum, but to throw in the chance of losing your own life. You have already lost; and now I suppose you are wondering why I have taken the trouble to bring you here, instead of having you killed at once the moment you fell into my hands?"

"Yes," that circumstance has puzzled me," Dick replied.

"I will explain to you my reason. When you made your bet, one of my agents stood by your side, and the bet was hardly offered and taken before another agent, mounted on a fast horse, was riding like the wind northward to bring me the news; and from the time that messenger reached me until your capture to-night, not a coach has rolled northward from Bannock city; not a 'pilgrim' has trod a trail leading to the Humbug Valley, but my scouts have seen and reported. You came in no coach to Humbug Bar, nor by any foot-path known

to man. Now, tell me how the deuce did you get into the town without my knowledge?"

"Perhaps some one of your spies has betrayed you?" Talbot suggested.

The teeth of the outlaw came down tightly together.

"By the Eternal! I'd cut his heart out if I could discover who it was that had played me false," Rob cried, fiercely. "I've had a man night and day on every mountain trail, in every gulch leading into the Bar. A full description of every man, woman and child has been brought to me. Now then, I want to know what hound has betrayed me. Tell me his name; give me your oath to trouble yourself no more about Rocky Mountain Rob or his affairs, and I will let you go free."

Talbot shook his head.

"What?" cried the road-agent, in a tone of menace. "do you refuse my offer?"

"I regret that I can not accept it," was Dick's reply. He certainly was not in the least agitated by the threatening manner of the outlaw.

"Why can not you accept?"

"Because your men are faithful. My wits, being keener than yours, showed me a way into Humbug Bar which your spies did not and could not guard. I knew you would hear that I was on your track, and guessed that you would lay in wait for me. The first trick was mine; the second is yours."

"And I rather think that the game will end now, suddenly," the bandit chief remarked, with evident significance.

"While there is life there is hope," was the composed rejoinder.

For a few moments the outlaw was silent; he gazed at Talbot intently, as if to read the truth in his face.

"I think that you are deceiving me," Rob said, slowly. "I fully believe that some one of my band has betrayed me and is in league with you. You would not have made so rash a bet had you not had some prospect of my capture. I'll make you another offer. I'll give you a thousand dollars and your life if you will reveal to me the name of your friend."

"Again I tell you that I can not," Talbot exclaimed, impatiently. "I have a friend who was to aid me in capturing you, but he never belonged to your band, and though I may die by your hand here, amid these rocks, yet my death-pang will be freed from half its pain by the thought that my faithful friend will hunt you down and have your life even though you should try to escape your fate by flying to the very ends of the earth."

"Sometimes they call you Injun Dick?" Talbot nodded assent to this unexpected question.

"The Indians bear fasting well, they say," the brigand said, musingly.

Dick guessed his meaning, but did not speak.

"Do you know what I'm going to do with you?" asked Rob, suddenly, finding that Dick did not speak.

"Well, from the pleasant words with which you have greeted me, during this brief interview, I should judge that my death moment is approaching much more rapidly than is entirely agreeable," Talbot was provokingly deliberate.

"You're a cool hand," said Rob, impulsively. "But you're wrong. I don't intend to kill you at present. I'm going to find out what I want to know. You've got a tough will, but I intend to break it before I get through with you. I owe you a grudge, too, for we are not exactly strangers to each other, and I might as well clear off the score now as wait."

"I guessed that I knew you by your voice, although you have tried to disguise it," said Dick, with decision.

"It don't make much difference whether you know me or not. I know you, and that's quite sufficient. Now then I'll tell you what's in store for you, and your mind will be easy. I'm going to shut you up in a little hole in the rock, about big enough for you to turn round in, and there I'm going to starve you to death. When you feel the pangs of hunger gnawing at your vitals, I rather think you'll be glad enough to beg for mercy."

"I'll bet you two to one I don't!" Talbot cried, undauntedly; "and now I say you're a bigger fool than I took you for."

"For not killing me at once. I shall escape from you, and then I'll win my bet, and carry you, living or dead, to Bannock!"

"That you'll never do."

"It's my life against yours now, and I'll win, sure!" Dick said, defiantly, as the two attendant ruffians advanced to remove him.

"Take him away!" The outlaw waved his hand in command.

One of the masked men took a candle from the wall, and led the way, Dick following unresistingly. The other masked bandit brought up the rear.

Through a narrow winding passage, a natural gallery in the rock, the three proceeded. A hundred paces on, they came to another but smaller vaulted chamber. This they crossed, and as they stood by the wall at the other end, two openings in the rock were perceptible. One, a broad and open passage, evidently the continuation of the gallery; the other, a mere hole in the rock, about two feet wide by four high; but, as the outlaw held the candle down by the entrance, the flickering light revealed that there was a small chamber beyond.

By the opening stood a huge boulder and a couple of crowbars.

"You're a big fool for not speaking out as our chief wants you to," remarked one of the masked men. "It won't be a pleasant death for you to starve in this hole."

"It will be some hours before that death will come," was the cool rejoinder.

"Oh! You don't stand any chance of escape!" cried the other masked man. "After we put you in the cell, we shall pry this boulder up against the hole, and if you had the strength of twenty men, you couldn't stir it from its place."

"Things are mighty uncertain in this world," Talbot dryly reminded the ruffian. "You won't find any thing unsartin in this case," said the outlaw; "you'll find some old bones inside to keep you company. One of our gang tried to kill the chief once, but he got a ball through the ribs, and then we shut him up here to get well. I never heered a feller cuss as he did the first two days, or pray like him the last three. It was awful, I tell you."

And as he spoke, he thrust the candle near to Dick's face, to note the effect of his words; but Talbot's nerves were of steel; it needed more than words to shake them.

"It was horrible, eh?" Talbot queried.

"You bet it was!"

"Then you can judge how you will feel when you find the noose around your neck, and the Vigilantes swing you up to the branch of a tall pine tree," said Dick, with a smile.

"The Vigilantes will never get hold of me," protested the ruffian, suddenly, evidently startled by the suggestion.

"I'll bet you five to one you swing before you're six months older," Dick replied, confidently.

"You won't live to see it, anyway!" the road-agent retorted.

"I'll take you five to one on that too!" Talbot cried, quickly, the ruling passion of the gamester strong even in that hour of peril.

"Come; get in your hole; you've talked long enough," the second outlaw said, roughly, and he took the candle from the other, and stooping down, entered the cavity.

Then upon the heavy air of the cave came a startling sound, familiar to every mountaineer.

"Twas the warning 'whir' of the rattlesnake!"

A single exclamation burst from the lips of the stricken man as he sprang back from the cavity, writhing with fear and pain. The outlaw had stepped directly upon the reptile, coiled asleep within the rocky passage, among the whitening bones of the man who had perished within that dark cell.

The candle, falling from the hands of the road-agent, was extinguished in an instant.

A moment, Talbot and his guard remained motionless, in the dense gloom, transfixed with horror. Then again came the fearful warning of the deadly serpent, which now had glided from the cavity.

With a yell of terror, both of the outlaws fled, unmindful of the prisoner, thinking only of escaping from the terrible reptile, which they could not see in the darkness.

Talbot could hear the outlaws stumbling over the rocks in their backward flight. A moment only he remained motionless. Surrounded by the dense darkness, he remembered the passage in the rock by the side of the cavity. Might it not be to him an avenue of escape?

(To be continued—commenced in No. 152.)

## The False Widow:

OR,  
FLORIEN REDESDALE'S FORTUNE.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,  
AUTHOR OF "ADRIA, THE ADOPTED," "CECIL'S DEBUT," "STRANGELY WED," "MADAME DURAND'S PROTEGES," ETC., ETC.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### THE BLOW FALLS.

THE next morning was ushered in with a settled drizzling rain. There was a raw air and an unbroken leaden sky which did not let a rift of the sunrise through.

Mrs. Redesdale rose in the struggling gray of the late dawn at seven that dismal January morning. The season, until the past week, had been unusually mild for the latitude, but this dreary rain, more penetrating than clear frost or keen winds, chilled the very marrow in the bones of the early pedestrian obliged to face it.

But Mrs. Redesdale's vaunt had not been made without just foundation, and she did not even shiver as she was rolled in her carriage through the streets to the depot. It would take more than wind and rain and dismal weather to turn her from the purpose she had in view. It was high noon when she got out at a wayside station, where she took a stage for the little coast town which was the address given her by Louis Kenyon as the place where his young wife was staying. It was only three miles over a level stretch of road, but the wind blew in from the sea strong and cold.

The driver on the box sunk his chin in his rough, high collar, and set his teeth in the face of it. Mrs. Redesdale, in heavy cloth and sable, settled back in the corner of the shabbily-cushioned seat, with no more apparent discomfort than if it had been her own luxurious carriage.

She was put down at a staring white hotel, which had its complement of summer parlors, but in the winter season was quite deserted except by casual wayfarers. Here she partook of a substantial dinner, and ordered a room prepared for the night, and afterward went out alone in pursuance of her self-appointed, wicked task.

A little low cottage, so close upon the shore that the high tides, creeping up, licked its base with their cold lips, she knew to be the house of the old fishwoman, with whom Isola was staying. She had obtained minute instructions regarding the locality from her son, in preference to calling attention and arousing curiosity by making inquiry in the vicinity. Comfortless and dilapidated seemed the weatherbeaten hut; bleak, and dispiriting the line of low coast; forbidding the dark sea under the murky sky—she saw all that as she approached.

"My dear son's resources must have run very low indeed," mused Mrs. Redesdale. "Very restricted and uncomfortable quarters his angel must find it here. I couldn't wish her narrower ones, except in that last resting-place she will be apt to think preferable before I am done with her. How strange, that of all the girls in this wide world, Louis should have chosen his daughter, and I hate her—I hate her for his sake. If I could banish her to that desert island where his bones are whitening—bah! I thought I had done with him and his when I left him there. Now for the innocent dove he left to the charities of the world for love of me—how foolish of him to regret it afterward and poison wedded bliss with his vain reproaches."

Her hand was upon the latch. It did not resist, and she entered without knocking, standing for a moment just within the entrance, studying the scene which the interior presented. A huge fireplace half-filled one side of the low room, and a back-log piled about with the drift cast up by the tide, shot dancing flames high up the wide chimney throat. Before it, in a rickety wooden rocker, with a scarlet shawl thrown over its back, sat a young, girlish creature, the freckle playing over her delicate face and bringing out the glittering brightness of her golden hair. The sweet face was wan and thin, the blue eyes woefully large and solemn, and the tendrils of curling hair clung about the blue-veined temples as if striving to hide their hollowness. One would think that the sight of that fair young creature would have stirred some pang of pity or remorse in the heart of the woman at the door, but it did not. She looked up

on her victim quite unmoved, wholly relentless.

Isola had not moved at the sound of the door turning on its noisy hinges, but at the unvoiced silence which followed she turned her head slightly as she spoke:

"Back so soon, Aunt Molly? Oh!"—as she caught sight of the strange figure, Mrs. Redesdale advanced to the hearth, her glittering black eyes still fixed upon the girl's face.

"Sit," she said, as Isola would have risen. "The old woman is not here?"

"She has just now gone to the village. Be seated, madame; you will have some time to wait for her return."

"It is you I have come to see. Come a long way, too—from New York."

"Me?—from New York?" A quick shade of apprehension crossed the girl's face. "Oh, then you must come from Louis! To such she happened—why has he not returned? Oh, please don't keep me in suspense. Has any harm come to my Louis?"

"He is well—quite well. I have come from him; I am his mother."

Isola leaned forward in the chair, her transparent hands clasping the arm tightly. "And you have forgiven him—oh, do say you have forgiven him. Poor boy! he was so fearful that you would be bitterly disappointed, and to think he should have incurred your displeasure for me. I didn't even know he had a mother until we came to such straits, and he determined at last to go to you."

"Truly a dutiful son."

"Don't be vexed with him, don't! It was all because of me; he thought I would not consent to marry him if I knew of you and that you were opposed. I am in fault, if any one is; but, indeed, I couldn't help loving him."

"I suppose not." That steady gaze fixed on the girl's face—strange, warning.

"You are not very angry, are you?" pleaded Isola, timidly. "I shall love you for his sake, and you—won't you love me a little?"

"Mothers are apt to have some affection for their children," answered the visitor, coldly. Isola looked at her, frightened and wondering.

"I am afraid we have distressed you very, very much," said she, in a quivering voice, ready tears springing into the big, wistful blue eyes. "Louis told me you wanted him to marry some rich young lady. I don't wonder that you are disappointed, for I haven't any thing but my love for him. I couldn't refuse him any thing, and, oh, dear madame, love is better than riches, surely. It wasn't so very wrong, was it, when we were so happy?"

"Wrong!" The woman in her rich dress and costly furs, with that resolute, unwavering cruelty in her hard face, rose up like a tower of wrath before the trembling girl. "Wrong!" Such a wicked, grievous wrong that you will not know peace to your dying day. Such a sinful wrong that life will be a burden, and death when it comes a relief. Girl, girl, you had better be dead than what you are."

Isola fell back in her chair, pale as death, and dumb with dread.

"Pitiful creature—ay, grow white and tremble! Well you may, frail thing that you are. Louis Kenyon, wedded to you in all faith as he was, is not your husband and he never can be."

"Not my husband—he is, he is! Louis would not deceive me," panted the pale lips.

Mrs. Redesdale raised her clenched hand, as though she would have struck her, but with an effort commanded herself, and spoke in the same cold tone.

"Would to heaven it were only that. You would be comparatively blessed if you were nothing more than the victim of man's treachery. You are worse—infinite worse. Louis Kenyon is your own brother, and I am mother of you both."

It seemed the very shadow of death itself sweeping over that pale face. Unutterable woe and horror staring out of the blue eyes, made even the cruel woman before her shrink away. Only for a moment, and yet she had not felt pity.

"It is the living truth, as God hears me!" And Isola, who could not understand that such sacrilege, and such perjury, could exist—that this declaration was false, was forced to believe.

"His sister! Oh, my God!"

The silence after that agonized cry, was broken by no word for a moment—a moment which was an age of agony, during which the wind tore at the loose boards of the hut, and the rain beat down without in continuous patter, the murmur of the sea rose monotonously, and the fire cracked and sparkled cheerily up the wide chimney throat. Could life be turned to such a burden of horror and despair, all in one second, and the little incidents of time go on unchanged?

"You are brother and sister." How cruelly clear and distinct the woman's tone rung. "He was the offspring of my first marriage, you of my second. Do you hear, girl? He knows the truth. He brought this fate upon you both by his disobedience and deception. You are more to be pitied—less to be blamed. I have come to take you away from here; I will do all I can to make you forget your misery."

Forget her misery! What a mockery of words.

"It can not be—oh, it can not be!" wailed Isola. "How could you desert me if you are my mother? It is some dreadful mistake—you do not know who I am—no one does."

"You are No. 53, adopted from the Foundling Hospital, by Mrs. Isola Snow; it was her name she gave you. She put you in a boarding-school somewhere up the Hudson when she went abroad. I was not rich always as I am now; I was very wretchedly poor once. We—your father and I—were going away from the city, and I could not be hurried by so young a child. I caused you to be taken to the hospital, where you would get better care than I could give you. I have your father's picture here, taken with mine; look and be convinced."

The nerveless fingers essayed to clasp the miniature case she shoved into them, and Isola's faint hope melted away as she saw the two faces pictured side by side. The woman's face was not much changed—youthful and fresher there, wonderfully like Louis now. And the other had just such blue eyes as her own, just such golden hair curling in little rings close about the wide fair brow, the very same cast of features.

"You see there can be no mistake. There's but one thing to do. You must go away from here, and you must forget the year that has passed. Life may be made very bright yet for one fair as you are; I

shall do all I can to soften the blow to you."

But her words fell on unheeding ears. Cold, unsympathizing words at best—it was as well they were not understood.

"She took it more quietly than I had hoped," mused Mrs. Redesdale, as she walked back through the dreary rain to the hotel. "I feared there would be a scene. There will be no difficulty now—she was even more credulous than I dared to hope. It may be less easy to impose the same story upon him, but with her fairly out of the way, it may be done. That miniature which Olse persisted in keeping, through all our wanderings, even after the sweetness of our love had turned to gall, found its use at last. I turned it over in my hand when I found it in the book with his papers of value, and debated whether or not I should leave it to cheer his lonely hours, should any fate spare him to drag out an involuntary exile in that desert isle. No fear of it—he was as good as gone, and I did not know but the mounted case might be of use some day. There are ups and downs, and I hardly hoped to find myself so secure."

And the girl whose despair she could reflect upon so lightly, how was she bearing up under the agony which had cast its blight upon her?

Rigid and death-like she lay back in her chair, the wide, staring eyes full of dumb pain. There was a dull ache in her heart as though it were compressed by ice-cold fingers. If she could only sob or cry out to loose their hold—but she could not. How the wind blew and rattled the panes! How the fire leaped, and danced, and made merry at her woe! What made her head so light? It was going up—up—there, the smoke-blackened rafters of the roof were right above it. How ridiculous it would be if it were not for that numbing pain which would not let her laugh! Where were those bells ringing such a deafening peal close to her ears—oh, it was the sea, she had forgotten that! The rush of many waters, and then darkness closed over the senses of the stricken girl.

The old fishwoman returning found her in a dead faint in her chair before the fire. The hours wore on, and pitch-darkness settled down before she opened her eyes to consciousness.

"Be still, honey; you're awful weak to go off in a fit like that one were. It's the cold that's come so sudden, glia you the chills, I reckon, and that hot fire right afore your face took the breath out'n you. Tve brung some wine and some cyestars, and I'll get somethin' strengthin' up in a jiffy. You mustn't gr'n up so just as it's comin' time fur him to come back."

Him—Louis! Isola's white lids went down, and a moan broke over her colorless lips.

"Whatever brung it on," muttered the old woman as she bustled about her good work. "It didn't come of nothin'. Like as not he's left her poor lamb! Men are alders doin' it—breakin' the hearts of such trustin' doves. Curs' 'em for it, I say."

Her patient drank the broth, and the heated wine she put to her lips without a word, and afterward fell into apparently deep slumber. The old woman replenished the fire, and throwing a tattered old quilt upon the hearth, laid herself down and soon snored lustily.

Then the blue eyes opened and the girlish figure slid from the bed noiselessly.

"I must get away from here, I must; I could not live and face that dreadful woman again," was the girl's wild thought. "Oh, Louis, Louis! Oh, if I were only dead!"

She dressed herself with feverish, silent haste. She looked more like a ghost than a living woman, so weird was the thin face ghastly white in the firelight flickering over it. She took the scarlet shawl from the back of the chair, where it was hanging, and wrapped it about her. Then, with a backward glance at the recumbent figure of the old woman sleeping upon the hearth, she lifted the latch and stepped out into the night.

It had ceased raining with the dusk. The blue-black sky was studded with stars, and a pale sickle of a moon hung above the rolling sea. The sea if she could only drown her anguish in its depths! She wandered close to its edge, impelled there almost against her will, fascinated by that thought which recurred again and again. If she could—could—if she could! Did Heaven never pardon a suicide, she wondered—was not her misery sufficient excuse? Could she go on living under the weight of her awful burden?

The tide was going out, and something swinging at a little distance, dipping up and down with the waves, drew her to approach it. It was a boat, half floating. A light, frail little boat, as she found by putting her hands upon it, for it yielded slowly to the impulse which made her exert her whole strength in pushing it out upon the water. A desperate thought had come to her. She cast the rope which held it, and pushing it further still, clambered in just as a receding wave carried it off the sands.

"Heaven forgive me if I am doing wrong," she whispered. "It shall be as He wills it, whether I live or die."

Surely this was tempting Providence, if ever Providence is tempted.

The little boat danced out over the rough black waters. The cold wind blew chilling through and through the girl's delicate frame. The weakness was coming back. She had overtasked her strength in this effort and the reaction was at hand.

She wrapped her shawl closer about her and lay down in the bottom of the boat. It was getting colder—colder. She was stiff and still, an icy weight bearing down upon her, growing heavier every moment.

Once the lips moved to whisper:

"Louis!"

Then the white face was upturned to the heavens, the blue eyes sealed as though never to open again.

And the boat floated on and on over the broad space of ocean, out of sight of the low-lying line of shore, on and on that long winter night.

#### CHAPTER XV.

IN THE DEPTHS, AND ON THE SURFACE.

LOUIS KENYON sat before the glow of a grate full of ruddy coals. He was in dressing-gown and slippers, looking pale, but different man than he seemed on the night of his unceremonious visit at the Redesdale mansion. A stand was drawn to his elbow littered over with morning papers. A case containing cigars lay open upon the mantel. He reached to take one now, biting off the end between his sharp, white teeth.

He drew a few whiffs, lying back in the



cushioned chair, and then the glowing tip died out into white ashes as he lost himself in a reverie. He started presently, laughed to himself, and relighted it.

"How nervous and absent-minded I am! Surely she will be here to-day—dear little Isola! She's roused up more good in me than I thought native to the soil in this year past. I couldn't go wrong and look into those big, clear blue eyes of hers without flinching, and she never found fault with the worst of the peccadilloes I could bring myself to confess to her. I'll just make a clean breast of this last affair—my getting in with the old crowd and going on a drunken spree afterward. She'll be so gentle, sorry too, that it will help to put down the temptation another time. The whole world is not so bad, after all. There's my mother, now—I always thought Nature forgot to insert a heart in her make-up, and here she is bringing me about in the most considerate manner, herself going down after Isola and insisting upon me nursing myself into good condition, that she may not be shocked at the change. Then, there's Marquestone, who got me into some of my worst scrapes—I'll do him the justice to say he always pulled me through—shows that he has a soft spot in his heart, and plans for me as generously as though he were in love himself. I shouldn't much wonder if he were, by Jove! and it's that which changes him. Odd, isn't it, what a power the gentle passion exerts over us? I, so hot-headed, ambitious, reckless, find myself gentle as a lamb—blessings on the little wife that's done it! It seems like a dream, too good to be true; I'd as soon shuffle off the coils as to wake from it, I think. It's a dear old world, after all's said."

He flung the unconsumed half of his cigar upon the coals, and with his fingers drummed the devil's tattoo upon the stand. There was a rustle without and a tap at his door.

"Come in!" he called. Then sprung up with an eagerly expectant look. It died out as his mother entered alone, closing the door after her.

"I hoped Isola might be with you," said he, placing a chair for her and resuming his own. "Unwarrantable and selfish, I suppose, but I'm thinking it very long to see the dear little girl. Where is she? At your house, I suppose, you dearest and kindest of mothers. To think I never appreciated you before! I'll make it up by being the most dutiful of sons hereafter. I suppose I'll have to be content with divided affection after this—Florien and Isola were inseparable at school. It will be a happy reunion for my little girl. Even I could never quite console her for the loss of her girl-friend. How is she, mother? she was ailing when I left her. Is she well—quite well?"

"His mother had her face turned from him, looking stolidly into the grate.

"Let me thaw out, Louis. It's cold—frightfully cold. You seem comfortable here."

"Thanks to you. I'm afraid I've been an ungrateful boy to you, but that's all changed now, isn't it, mother mine?"

She glanced at his bright, hopeful face, and for the first time she saw that she did not reflect his enthusiasm.

"You do look cold, and you've been on the go until you're tired out. Let me order something for you—wine?"

"No, nothing. You've got to bear a disappointment, Louis."

"What! didn't you bring her? Is she sick, poor little wife? Speak, mother; I shall go to her at once."

"You will never go to her on this earth."

"What do you mean? what have you done, woman? You have not harmed her! By heaven, it could be an evil day any one injured Isola."

"Be quiet, Louis. The girl ran away from the fisherman's boat, unknown to any one, and in the dead of night."

"Then it was you did it—you drove her to it! What devil's story have you been hatching up for her?"

His eyes were blazing, his face pale with indignation.

"Nothing but the truth. She was traced to the shore and there the track stopped. I—think—the girl—made way with herself, Louis."

She spoke slowly, watching the effect of her words. A change came over his face—a startled, awed look.

"Dead! You don't mean that? Don't tell me that she's dead."

"It would be better for you if she were."

"You lie!" He turned upon her fiercely.

"Tell me at once what have you said, what have you done to Isola? Fool! that I ever believed in you. It will be a sorry day's work for you unless you right all the wrong you've done, if any."

"It is bad taste to address a lady in that manner, Louis. Undutiful, too. I didn't send her there, if your angel has gone to her proper sphere. I have full as much reason to be affected by her disappearance as you."

"Yes, you have. I shall hold you accountable whatever has occurred. You shall pay doubly, madame, for all you make her suffer."

"She was more filial," sneered Mrs. Redesdale. "But, then, women plead no threat. Let me beg of you to sit down again. You discompose me with those violent manifestations."

"Good God! Does the woman expect me to sit and sipper and sugar-coat my questions after what she has told me? Speak, if you will; keep silent if you wish. I will not remain in suspense."

"My dear Louis, have patience. You shall have the revelation in good time—immediately if you insist. You were so unfortunate as to run away with and marry your own sister. I wonder you didn't recognize her by the semblance she bears her father. However that may be, I told her simply the truth."

"What—what is it you say?"

"The girl is your sister."

"It is false—I never had a sister."

"To your knowledge, perhaps. It is unfortunately true. You ran away, if you remember, during the first year after your marriage with Mr. Kenyon. You were gone for months, and in that time the girl was born. I didn't wish to let it be understood that the babe had gone to glory on the way."

"Are you a woman, or a demon, that you have no more soul than that? You could not desert your own babe in that cold-blooded way. It is a base lie trumped up to deceive us both."

"It is truth," she answered, doggedly.

"For the rest you should be able to judge. You know what an affectionate mother I was, and what assiduous care I bestowed upon you in tender years. But, then, I loved your father, and I hated hers; that made a difference."

He threw himself into a chair and dropped his face in his hands.

"Heaven knows, you are capable of any thing cruel or bad. Oh, Isola! my poor little Isola!"

"Your sister—remember!"

He flung back his head, with an expression of indescribable loathing on his face.

"Go! before I am tempted to murder you!" he cried, hoarsely. "I could do it with as little compunction as I would crush a venomous snake. It would be better for the world if I was to strike you dead where you stand."

She threw back a taunting laugh as she moved toward the door.

"How blessed I am in my children! Don't murder me, Louis; it would make you such a notorious monster, you know. Murderer of his mother, and—"

"Stop!" he thundered. "One word to sully her memory, and your life shall pay the forfeit."

Bold as she was, for her very life she dared not utter the scathing words which trembled upon her tongue. She vanished through the closing door, and Louis Kenyon was alone with his despair.

"Colonel Marquestone and Mr. Kenyon," the servant announced, flinging back the door.

It was a week after that interview between Louis and his mother. A week during which he had alternately striven to fight off the conviction that she had spoken truth, and cursing himself that he had not suspected it from Isola's striking resemblance to his mother's second husband, Alec Kenyon. And Isola was dead—little Isola who had loved him so! The blow had broken her heart, and it had sent him back into drearier depths than any from which her love had rescued him. He had been a young man of generous impulses and weak practices of bad examples; now, all that had inclined to nobility in him seemed to have died with her. He never doubted that she was lying at the bottom of the sea, the white hands which had smoothed his hair tangled about with loathsome weeds and slimy reptiles, the blue eyes staring sightlessly under the cold, green waters, which sung their requiem about her awesome last resting-place.

The wonder was that he had not plunged in a mad road of dissipation to deaden his anguish—he probably would have done so, but Colonel Marquestone seldom left his side during these days, and he wielded a stronger influence than the young man himself suspected. Ready for any thing to blunt his acute suffering, Louis was not hard to lead in the very course they had planned for him.

"At last," said Mrs. Redesdale, with a bright smile of welcome. "What a stranger you are making of yourself, colonel—the first call in a week. How you gentlemen of leisure let us lonely women slip out of your minds. Mr. Kenyon, it is a pleasure to see you among us. Florien, my dear—Mr. Kenyon, my daughter, Miss Redesdale. What! old friends? I was not aware of it. Mr. Kenyon is the celebrated young artist I have engaged to paint your portrait, Florien. My dear sir, you must let me have my own way and prosecute the work here in the house. There is an upper chamber which will suit admirably as a studio, and its arrangements shall be made at your dictation."

"You are very kind, madame. I shall be most happy to defer to Miss Redesdale's convenience."

Do his best he could not make his words more than very coldly courteous. The remembrance of her heartlessness, which had resulted so fatally for himself and the fair young girl he had taken for his wife, was ever present with him as a dull rage which smoldered under his smiling civility. It might not always remain so—the sullen flame might burst all bounds some day with terrible consuming power.

"You do not confine yourself wholly to landscape painting, then?" remarked Florien.

"I devote myself to the study of all that is natural and beautiful, Miss Redesdale. To be candid, the execution of portraits is best paying. Genius is one thing, a shabby coat quite another, and for my part I don't take to shabby coats. Are you really enjoying the hollow deceptions of this world, is all a fleeting show, you know. Isn't it pleasant to make such a glittering show of it as you are able to do? Ah, you know no thing of the misery entailed in the compulsory wearing of a shabby coat; that unenviable fate is reserved for us poor devils who have brains instead of purses. The two don't often hunt in couples, I'm sorry to say."

"Haven't you been growing cynical, Mr. Kenyon?"

"Perhaps—very likely, I think. We're apt to wear off the fine edges in a rough rub with the odds of circumstance. You must let me take you to our Art Gallery, Miss Redesdale. I have a picture on exhibition; just a bit of Hudson scenery by moonlight, but it's rather well done, I flatter myself."

At the further end of the long room, Mrs. Redesdale and Colonel Marquestone were carrying on their conversation in a low tone.

"How have you managed all so admirably and in so short a time, colonel? You have achieved wonders, and I am curious to know the means you employed. If I should be inclined to be superstitious, I should think that fate was working too smoothly into our hands, and means to turn on us by-and-by."

"The battle is not to the strong alone, but to the active, the vigilant, the brave," he quoted. "My dear Mirette, we are active and vigilant, and with us impudence stands for bravery, I think. As to the means I employed, they were simple enough. I kept him from drinking instead of tempting him to it, as you would have done. His grief was of the hopeless kind, which had nothing to feed upon. Was it a trumped-up story, that of the girl feeding herself to the fishes? He seemed to believe it very thoroughly."

"There's no doubt of it, I think. Those soft, babyish women are apt to take such an affair very seriously to heart."

"Hun—deuced bad taste, I say."

The colonel had received his account of the matter from Mrs. Redesdale herself, and got no hint of the true means she had brought to bear in effecting her end. He did not suspect the close tie of blood she

had declared existing between the two young people, or how infinitely preferable the most horrible death would appear to the pure-minded girl, rather than life and the burden of sin—unconsciously committed though it were—she must bear through it.

"If he had the slightest hope that the girl could be alive, I don't think we would have found him such a submissive tool. But then, fifteen thousand a year has its charms, even for a heart that's bereaved, and our dear boy is neither blind nor indifferent to the main chance."

"He is too much his mother's son for that," answered Mrs. Redesdale, complacently. "Our machinery is all in motion now, is it not?"

"Pretty much. I have Lynne well in my power already, and he will be out of his depth entirely by the time we are ready for it. He picked up a little last night by plucking that California fool. How will the young lady take it when her faithful swain gives her the cold shoulder, do you think? Plucky enough to face it out, I judge."

"Better than that. Florien don't care a straw for the man in her heart. It's the old romance of first love when she was poor, and that's all I can't understand about it. Walter Lynne is scarcely one to sacrifice himself for dear love's sake. I think it's probable he was amusing himself with her, and the news of her unsuspected fortune 'proved him true.' However that may be, Florien holds to the idea that she must be so because she has plighted her word. She'll not be sorry for the release, mark my words!"

"By Jove! I believe you're right. Look at those wild, presumptuous little turtles, and as oblivious of us as if we were across the continent instead of only the length of the room between us."

Not quite so absorbed nor so oblivious as the colonel's remark suggested, but still very pleasantly engrossed were the young couple. Florien took her place at the piano at his request, and sang the songs of his choosing.

You must requite me in the same manner," she said, smilingly, at last. "I have not forgotten what a rich baritone you are fortunate enough to possess."

"Nor the occasion when you heard it first, may I dare to hope?"

"Seasons may roll, but the true soul burns the same, where'er it goes."

I shall never forget it, nor the long, long year I have kept aloof, trying in vain to conquer the wild, presumptuous girl who sprung up at that first moment of our meeting. You warned me of my folly once, but if it be folly still, I must abide by it. Shall I sing for you—what?"

He was finding a pleasurable excitement in this pursuit to which he had lent himself, and his words, tones and glances were all passionate as though their burden had been truth.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 149.)

## A Love-affair.

BY ELEN E. REXFORD.

It was a summer afternoon. The editor of the *Post* sat in his sanctum, with his heels considerably elevated and his face wearing a puzzled expression.

Editor Reid was in a brown study. And the cause of his perplexity was before him in the shape of a dainty sheet of white note-paper, scented with violets or roses, he wasn't exactly sure which.

I'd give a good deal to know who and where this came from, he said, knocking the ashes from his cigar, and taking up the letter again, he read it over for perhaps the twentieth time.

It read:

"Perhaps it's not strictly according to propriety for the writer of this to take the initiatory steps in the matter, but she trusts the recipient will judge her more favorably than the gossiping Mrs. Grundys would, if they were to hear of it. Would it suit the editor of the *Post* to correspond with the writer, or would it not?"

"Such a proceeding would certainly afford much pleasure to the writer of the note. Her object was more amusement and recreation; possibly some information and benefit might result from it. Who knew?"

"Should it meet with the editor's favor, the correspondence might begin at once. A letter addressed to 'Carrie Wynne' would reach her."

"Carrie Wynne" was not the writer's real name; that much she would inform him, but what that young lady's real name was, who she was, or where she lived, was not to be revealed at present. The name given in the letter, and as nothing but amusement was expected to result from the correspondence, the real name of the writer was of no consequence."

Editor Reid, always susceptible to the blandishments of the fair sex, saw something very romantic in this letter. It promised rare sport. There was a certain alibi, a tantalizing mystery about it. Who could have written it? Was it any one he knew?

He asked himself the question over and over again, but the more he questioned himself, the less able he was to answer. He knew of no young lady who would be apt to open a correspondence in such direct violation of the laws of propriety and gentility. Appleton young ladies, as a general thing, were very careful about propriety.

The more he pondered on the matter, the more attracted he had for him, and before he left the office that night, he had written an answer to "Carrie Wynne," and sent it to the post-office with the evening mail.

Editor Reid waited in suspense for the next few days, for the reply to his letter.

By-and-by it came. The same white paper, the same delicate scent of violets or roses, and the same handwriting, fine and rather irregular, he could not admit, but rather suggestive of piquancy, he thought.

He read this second epistle through with intense interest. The mystery about the unknown writer invested it with a keen zest for him.

"I'm sure I should like her," he said, returning the sheet to its envelope, after having read it over two or three times very carefully. "She evidently understands herself on a large range of subjects. She can quote poetry, and doesn't get swamped on metaphysics, and seems to understand the events of the times."

From which you may infer that Miss "Carrie Wynne's" letters were a curious mixture of subjects. And they were. From "gay to grave," from light, social gossip, to deeper topics of thought. Evidently the writer was rather a peculiar young woman. Sometimes, suddenly, in the midst of a sentimental effusion, a de-

cidedly slangy expression would crop out, making him think of the terms in vogue at the university in town where the *Post's* versatile editor had been a student. Perhaps the "fair unknown" was a lady student. He knew many of them, but among them all he knew no one likely to be the author of the epistles which came regularly, once a week, to the editorial sanctum.

He got terribly interested in the correspondence before the winter ended. He besought an interview "at his office on College avenue." He could not get his correspondent to consent to give him that pleasure. He begged for an interview at any place she might appoint—her residence, her boarding-place, any public resort, anywhere that might be most convenient; he did not care where, if only he could see her whose letters had created such an interest in his young and susceptible heart for their writer. Not that he expressed himself in such terms, but they were hardly less emphatic and expressive.

But she was loth to give him a chance to get disenchanted, she wrote. If he should see her, she was sure the correspondence would lose all its interest for him, and she was enjoying it too much to run the risk of having such an abrupt end put to it.

So she led him on, and the spring wore into summer, and the editor began to believe that he was really in love with the unknown fair one. And gradually his letters grew more and more lover-like, until at length they were really models of a gentleman's love-correspondence, or what such a correspondence might be expected to be, under the circumstances. The more she read the more intense became his passion to find out all about her, and confess his love to her. He couldn't half "throw himself" in his letters. Three or four sheets of note-paper didn't give him any chance to say what he longed to. He was getting desperate. He had hung about the post-office, all in vain. He had questioned the clerks, but they either knew nothing about "Carrie Wynne," or would not give him any clue, they knew who the young lady was. She evidently knew how to keep her secret.

At length there were signs of a disposition to relent in her letters, and hopes were held out of an interview some time. Encouraged to renew his pleadings, he besought her so wildly, that she consented to meet him at dusk, in Pearce's Park, just outside the city, on a certain evening.

The editor was on his "high horse." At last! at last! after so much suspense, the mystery was to be solved, and he was to stand face to face with his unseen charmer. That was all his fancy painted her, he never once doubted. The author of such piquant, fresh, spicy letters could be nothing but charming.

The evening came at last, though he began to think it never would.

At dusk he wended his way toward Pearce's Park. The evening was cool and frosty, and he saw with satisfaction that the park was quite deserted.

He reached the spot appointed for the interview, and sat down to wait for her coming.

The idea of the impropriety a young lady would be guilty of in meeting a young gentleman at that hour, in such a place, did not once occur to him. He was too much interested to think much about the matter of propriety.

He waited for an hour. Was that a step he heard, or was it the wind?

It was a step! She was coming!

A form clad in dark garments came up the path, and stopped beside him.

"Are you—do I have the pleasure of seeing Carrie Wynne?" he asked, excitedly.

"You do," responded the young lady, in a very broken voice.

"She is probably much agitated," he thought. "It is but natural that she should be." I infer from that, that she is not in different; that she has not come here with feelings wholly unlike my own."

He helped her to a seat upon a rustic sofa, and sat down beside her, and began, almost immediately, the story of his suspense, his longings, his ardent love. Was it returned?

Miss Wynne made some sort of a reply, but it was quite indistinct, and he was as much in the dark as before, as to her feelings with regard to the matter.

Her evident agitation gave him confidence, and he gradually slipped an arm around her waist, and drew her nearer to him. Their position was truly lover-like. She let her head recline against his frame, and a swift emotion shook her frame.

"Let me have one glance into your eyes, dearest," he pleaded. "Just one." For she had kept her veil down all this time, effectually concealing her face.

"One glance, and one kiss," he pleaded; and she did not say him nay.

He unfastened her veil, and snatched a kiss, a burning, passionate kiss, before he threw it aside completely, and left her face exposed to his admiring view.

There was something strange about the kiss, for it made him start back with a sudden cold sensation stealing all over him, and the recipient of it was powerfully affected by it. She trembled with a deep emotion.

"Did young ladies ever have such prickly faces? He took one swift glance into the face which the young lady before him lifted to his, and saw the face of Tom Withers, his office boy!

The emotion which shook the fair one became perfectly irresistible, and a series of shudders, shivers and spasms went over her frame, and all at once she collapsed on the rustic sofa, her hands on her sides, and the feelings of her young and tender heart ran over and bathed her cheeks in tears.

"I'm so glad you love me," she whispered, as well as she could for the emotions which struggled within her. "Was that kiss a sweet one?"

A series of shouts and laughter went up all at once about the scene of this lone episode, and dark forms might have been seen slipping down from the trees growing near, and going off into paroxysms of delight the moment they touched ground.

"Ye editor" gave one look about him, and took his departure. His heart bled with a sense of unrequited love, and the fact that he had been sold.

The next day he wasn't at the office, but Tom Withers received a note from him rather more forcible than polite, and considerably different in tone from those he had formerly taken pleasure in sending to that individual, informing him that his services could be dispensed with in the future.

Tom left a very tender and affecting epistle on the editorial desk, assuring him that his fervent love was fully returned, and that

the memory of that kiss would always be cherished as one of the sweetest events of his life, and assuring him that, come what come woe, he would always be true to him, and that he should hold himself in readiness to become Mrs. Editor Reid at any moment.

The wedding has not come off yet. It isn't quite safe to ask Reid about "Miss Wynne." He is quite apt to get excited over the memory of his "lost love."

## Short Stories from History.

Old Legends of the New World.—In the previous issue we noted the fact that the Welsh regarded themselves as the advance discoverers of this continent; now we have to note the fact that the Irish also claim the honor of priority in discoveries in the West. As early as the tenth century, legends were current concerning a "White-man's land" or "Great Ireland over the sea." These stories rested upon the vaguest rumors, and would have hardly been worth mentioning if so much importance had not been attached to them in the publications of the Society of Northern Antiquaries. One is amazed to see the precision with which the boundaries of these fabulous regions were laid down in the society's maps. All the lately-confederated States are included in these boundaries, the coast line running from the Potomac to the Rio Grande, the Rocky Mountains forming a substantial western limit. The northern frontier was fixed by the evidence of a very ancient saga, mentioning the capture by the Norsemen of certain Esquimaux children who spoke of a country to the south of their own, where the people wore white dresses, and carried poles with flags and lappets, shouting loudly as they walked; and Humboldt himself was half inclined to believe that this story related to the Great Ireland, and afforded an indication of the existence of Christianity in America at that early date. The men in white, carrying poles, and shouting as they walked, were of course taken to represent the Christian priests walking in religious procession.

To show the feebleness of the evidence which is considered to be sufficient in matters of this kind, the southern limit of this legendary country was fixed by the Danish antiquarians by reference to the evidence of an old Shawnee Indian who lived somewhere in Florida about a hundred years ago. His name was Black Hoof, which they have lengthened into the Roman majesty of "Blackhoofus Indigatus," and he is said to have heard in his youth that white men had come to Florida many hundreds of years ago; and that is all. Sir Walter Scott translated another story about the Irish colony (in the Eyrbiggia Saga); and several other old books contain allusions to the legend. Importance has been attached to these tales as showing an ancient belief among sailors, long before the time of Columbus, that a north-east wind would take a ship from Ireland to another country in the west; but it may well be doubted whether the least historical importance can be attached to any saga which does not deal expressly with the acts of well-known chiefs or kings, or with events of real national importance. In composing the minor romances of Northern Europe, the sole object seems to have been to while away with dramatic fables the long winter nights; and the domestic audience was unlikely to be severe in demanding more than a slight foundation of likelihood or fact.

We have much more precise information as to the visits of the early Greenland colonists to the continent of America. It was, indeed, doubted at one time whether Old Greenland was not a creation of Scandinavian romance; but the actual remains of the colony have been brought to light, and modern discoveries have verified the ancient descriptions of the country, its climate and products. Besides the foundations and walls of houses, now overgrown with dwarf willows and scurvy grass, large churches and portions of graveyards have been found, in the situations mentioned in the ancient Icelandic records. In one plain, once a meadow, but now overgrown with dandelions and juniper brush, many fragments of coarse bell-metal, parts of church bells, were picked up by the natives and hoarded as specimens of gold. Runic inscriptions have been found as far north as the Woman Islands in lat. 72 deg. 55 min.; and the most recent expeditions have confirmed the existence of all the natural landmarks mentioned by the chroniclers. Their "reins of gold" are shown to be deposits of iron pyrites; the warm winds in winter, which seemed so marvelous to the ancient colonists, have been described by Sir L. M'Clintock; and the hot springs of Onartok confirm the old Norsemen's account of the boiling fountains at which the monks in Greenland cooked their food.

Greenland was colonized at the end of the tenth century, and the settlement prospered for four hundred years. After the devastations of Black Death, the settlers had to recede gradually before the advance of the Esquimaux or "Skroelings"; and a valuable account of the country, just before the time when intercourse with Europe ceased, is to be found in Purchas's "Pilgrims." Ivor Bardson, high-steward to the bishop, was sent to the northern parts of the colony to drive back the Esquimaux. "There," he wrote, "is still standing a church where formerly our bishop dwelt; but now the wild Skroelings have all that land; and there are many cattle, but no people, Christian or heathen; but all have been carried off by the enemy, the Skroelings." This is the last which was heard of the doomed colony; and no one knows the fate of the last handful of settlers. Danish writers have been fond of imagining the migration of their countrymen to the ice-bound recesses of the east coast of Greenland, where they are supposed to remain, "carrying on a perpetual war with the savages, in revenge for the ruin of their ancestors." But this is a mere fancy, which has been gradually discredited; and except in the books of the antiquarians, and the vague rumors of the seas, the memory of Old Greenland has passed away.

## WITLESS SETH,

The Dumb Scout of the Des Moines!

Few writers have the power to control the attention like Oll Coomes. That every one of his stories have been unqualified successes, our readers know, and in this new work, shall see him advancing even on his hitherto brilliant narratives of life on the border and in the Indian domains.







## A FEBRUARY LETTER.

To Miss Didiain.

BY TOM GOULD.

Was it by Providence designed?  
Or did some elf, supremely kind,  
So move this recent hand of mine,  
To pen you this my valentine?

Strange I should occupy this space  
In penning lines to thy sweet face.  
I never versed in poet's lays,  
Nor schooled to sing a woman's praise,  
Yet artful Cupid seems to sway,  
For all my rhymes will go your way!

Ere I dare to seek my slumbers,  
Let me dedicate these numbers.  
Embodiment of artless grace,  
Matchless form, and—homely face.

I love! That's not  
So strange; but what  
Doth so attract you, ask,  
Grant me the boon,  
I'll tell thee soon,  
Nor deem it such a task.

I love the trees,  
I love the breeze,  
That gambols over the meadow.  
I love the dew,  
Its solemn spell,  
Of glimmering light and shadow.

I love each brook  
And shady nook—  
The broad lands unconfined.  
When winter blazes,  
My fancy caits  
Some pleasure on the wind.

The stars above:  
I dearly love  
To see them twinkle so,  
With mellow light,  
Throughout the night—  
And God hath told them to.

My loves in store  
I can not score;  
On some points I'm a sinner.  
I'd rather vex  
The gentle sex  
Than sacrifice my dinner.

Yet, Miss Didiain,  
I give me pain  
To say, in point of duty,  
You would be fair,  
If your back hair  
Seemed not a borrowed beauty.

But, oh, your eyes!  
When fancies tries  
To match them with the stars  
Their spiritual glow  
Doth haunt me so,  
That fancy paints old scars.

Your teeth—I vow  
I dare not now  
Say aught, lest I should blunder;  
I ask of you—  
"Pray, which are new,  
The upper or the under?"

But then, your cheek  
A warmth doth speak,  
I vow 'twould thrill Pygmalion  
Yet I'm not sure  
That that is love,  
Nature, and not vermillion.

But let me, pray,  
At once essay  
To praise your speech and manners—  
But oh, alack!  
When at my back,  
I do not know  
If friend or foe  
Is written on your banners.

Oh, gods of love  
And sprites above!  
If aught I say, 'tis railing,  
Perhaps I might  
Confession write,  
And own, it is my failing.

I feel I must  
No longer trust  
This rambling pen to rhyme;  
In this strange life's  
Eventful strife,  
May happy hours be thine.

## Cat and Tiger:

OR,  
THE STAR OF DIAMONDS.  
A ROMANCE OF LOVE AND MYSTERY.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.,  
AUTHOR OF "IRON AND GOLD," "RED SCORPION,"  
"PEARL OF PEARLS," "HERCULES, THE HUNCH-  
BACK," "FLAMING TALISMAN," "BLACK  
CHERRY," ETC., ETC.

## CHAPTER I.

THE PRESENCE OF THE SHADOW.

A stormy night in the city of Philadelphia.

Vivid lightning darted across the black

skies, and loud thunders pealed in the

throat of the hurrying wind. The flood-gates of heaven seemed opened

on the earth, and the streets were deserted

in the fierce hissing of the rain torrents.

We enter a house of imposing architec-

ture, situated on Walnut street near

Evidence of wealth glittered on every

hand; and the brilliant jets of the chandel-

ier hid, from those within, the fire-tongues

of electric fluid.

In the parlor, walking slowly to and fro,

with head hung, and brow slightly dark-

ened by a frown, was a woman of transcen-

dent loveliness, attired in costly raiment and

weighted with jewels.

She was excited by thoughts that just

then trained through her mind; and anon she

would pause, fold her bare, spotless arms

and pat impatiently on the smooth skin

with her gemmed fingers. Her red lips

were tightly compressed; her large eyes

—black as midnight, and sparkling with

diamonds, and shaded by long, silken lashes—spark-

led with unworldly brilliancy, and her

bosom rose and fell with short respira-

your mistress, and I command you to speak.

Tell me what you have seen?"

A spirit of some kind, a frightful shape

that has iced the blood in my veins," she

answered, shuddering.

A spirit! Ha! ha!—yes; go on. Go

on, Eloise—you have seen a spirit! I knew

that.

You knew it, madame?"

Did I not say so? Now, what did it

look like?"

One color of green, madame, from head

to foot, with gleaming eyes, and a voice

that laughed at me. It was like a maniac's

screach.

Yes—yes, a laugh like the screech of a

maniac! I heard that, too. But, its face,

Eloise? Tell me—you saw its face?"

Madame, it had none.

Yes—it had none; so you did not see it.

This thing without a face, yet with eyes,

with voice—what is it? Where did you

meet it?"

On the stairs leading to the kitchen,"

with a shiver.

Yes, on the stairs leading to the kit-

chen. What more?"

It came upon me suddenly, madame—

Yes—suddenly—as it always does—this

shadow of green, this demon shape without

a face, yet with eyes, and a voice, and—but

I am waiting. Why do you not go on? I

would know more. You saw it on the kit-

chen stairs—what then?"

Then, when it laughed so horribly in

my ears, it fled toward the kitchen, mad-

ame.

And vanished?"

Yes, it disappeared—

Through the wall!—up the chimney!—

under the floor!—vanished in air! Am I

not right?"

I could not tell, madame; as soon as I

could find strength, I ran hither.

A deep silence ensued.

Helene Cercey was thinking. The girl,

keeping close to her, still trembled, still

glanced uneasily into the dark shadows that

filled the hall without.

Eloise.

Yes, madame.

This thing has followed me now for fifteen

years.

Fifteen years!" repeated the girl, in

surprise.

I said fifteen years. This shape of

green, with staring eyes and strange laugh,

yet faceless, has hovered nigh me, wherever

I have been—dogging in my path, terrify-

ing eyes, dilating nostrils, and a set frown.

His head was well shaped, with hair that

was black, thin, very long.

As he leaned comfortably back in the

chair, one hand—doubled to a huge fist—

lay idly on the table, and the sharp, keen

eyes rested on the carpeting.

Cortez Mendoza was thinking; and his

thoughts ran thus: "So it is fifteen years ago, at last. Fif-

teen years of a dog's life—pain, anger, tor-

ture, curses, foaming. Malediction! Have

I not nursed my hopes well? Yes—well.

Helene Cercey would believe me dead. So,

Yes, it pleased her to think that Cortez

Mendoza died, or was killed in a fight, in

New Orleans, a month ago. Ha! ha! but

I am alive! She will be disappointed. I

am here. Malediction!—yes, I am here.

She shall see me to-night—and talk with

me, hear me, ha! ha!—yes, Cortez Men-

doze is here, after fifteen years, for the an-

swer you promised him. Ah! you've

brought it? Set it down. Now go," the

closing speeches to the waiter, who brought

in the punch.

Any thing else, sir?"

No.

A crab?—nice crabs, sir—

Malediction! Begone!" striking the

table with his fist in a way that made the

castors rattle, the plates to dance, and the

waiter to leave hurriedly.

When alone, Cortez growled to himself

and turned to suck at the straws in the

glass. He was soon thinking again, but no

longer spoke aloud.

Suddenly a form stood in the doorway—

a man, short in stature, thin, with gray eyes,

smooth face, and wearing a tight-fitting cap.

Cortez looked up. He saw that this par-

ty was scrutinizing him, and he returned

the stare, half in surprise, half in anger.

You are Cortez Mendoza," said the

small man in a peculiar voice.

Malediction! And who are you?—you

gaping monkey!" and Cortez started from

his chair.

But the stranger vanished toward the bil-

liard room.

When Cortez reached the door, no one

was to be seen.

Malediction on him! Who is it? He

says, "You are Cortez Mendoza; and then

—fiz-z-z!—he is gone! He knows me well.

But who is he? What did he mean by that?

ha!" the closing exclamation as a hand

touched his shoulder, and he turned to con-

front an aged negro.

It was not one of the servants of the es-

tablishment, for, at sight of him, Cortez

said:

Farak! Now then! what are you doing

here?"

Master," returned he called Farak, hur-

riedly, bowing his white-haired head, and

pausing in his speech.

Tell me, Farak—did you see a monkey-

of-a-man dart out from here this minute?"

I did not, master.

Death catch him! He has made me

nervous," Cortez muttered. "If I had him in

my fingers I could wring his head off! But,

what are you doing here? Did you follow

me?"

I was seeking you, master," replied the

negro, in a very low yet very even and dis-

tinct tone.

And for what? Malediction! I shall

lose my punch! Speak out, then!"

Farak is sorry to displease you," he

apologized; "but something has happen-

ed."

Ha!" Cortez leaned eagerly forward.

Will you come back to the hotel?"

Farak was the servant of Cortez Men-

doze; and, judging from the way in which

he addressed the Spaniard, he must have

been the latter's slave at one time, for the

habit of using the word "master" still

clung to him.

The negro had something to communi-

cate—Cortez easily perceived this; and

leaving the punch unfinished, he paid at

the counter, and followed Farak from the

place.

Though apparently well advanced in years,

Farak's step was firm and elastic; and not-

withstanding a perceptible bend in the

back, there was an air of quiet dignity in

his bearing, which years of servitude had

not yet worn out.

When the two were in their apartment,

at the hotel, Farak closed the door, then

pointed toward the bureau, where, sticking

in the frame at one end of the mirror, was

a neatly-folded note.

Ha! what's that? A note!—who

from?" striding forward to the bureau.

I can not say who it is from, master—

He was interrupted by a sharp cry that

issued from the Spaniard's lips.

Malediction! See—it is addressed in

green! Green ink, Farak!"

I see, master.

But the negro did not look at it. He was

standing respectfully to one side, his head

bowed and body bent, while the first was

bobbing slightly, with the nervousness of

his years.

Cortez stared at the note for a second,

then snatched it from the frame, and tore it

open—to cry out, instantly:

Malediction! Look at this! It is writ-

ten in green ink, and it says: "Cortez Men-

doze is not so safe as he supposes himself to

be. He may fly from ocean to ocean, or

north, or south; but, the curse of his deeds

shall follow him swiftly, and the Green

Shadow will haunt him to the grave!" Ha!

Farak—do you hear? Caramba! You

hear what it says? It will dog me to my

grave—haunt me forever! Is it not pleasant

—ha! ha!—to be followed by something

you can not see?—something that writes

letters, that uses green ink, that has made

my life miserable for fifteen years! Ha!

ha!—yes, it's pleasant. I rather like it!

Laugh, Farak—laugh!" and Cortez ground

his teeth savagely, pulled hard at one end

of his mustache, and worked the fingers of

his disengaged hand, as he gazed on the

mysterious note which had fluttered to his

feet.

Farak saw that his master was being

consumed by the fiery thoughts and passion

aroused by what he had just read. The

dark face of Cortez Mendoza had turned to

an ominous pallor, and his eyes, dancing,

flashing, as they fixed upon the significant

missive, were protruding in their sockets.

Master—

But the Spaniard wheeled upon him, with

a hiss.

How did you come by this?—when?

—who gave it to you?" rapidly.

It was soon after you went out, master,

that some one knocked at the door—knock-

ed very hard—

Yes, some one knocked at the door,"

repeated Cortez, twirling his mustache by

jerk.

I answered," continued Farak, "and

saw there a very short man—

A short man!" echoed Cortez.

Very thin—

Very short and thin!" broke in the

Spaniard again, now pulling at both ends

of his mustache, rocking from heels to toes,

while his white teeth glistened behind the

lips that he dragged apart.

His eyes were gray—

Yes—yes!" in a sort of whining cry.

And he wore a cap—

Ho! Malediction! it was he who came

to the door, at the restaurant, and said:

"You are Cortez Mendoza?" If I had him

now by the throat, I could choke him!

Mad or not, I am myself, Helene Cercey,



most of my race. But what is this Green Shadow? What means it? There must be one act in the life of Cortez Mendoza that Farak does not know of—an act to bring upon him some deep curse, with a burning brain to rob him of many a night's repose. And what has Cortez Mendoza to do with it? Who is Cortez Mendoza, tiger of my master, Cortez Mendoza, and set him to foaming at the mouth with passion?"

He read and re-read the note, continuing his soliloquy, and wondering what it was Cortez Mendoza had done, in the past, that he should be haunted, that he should receive such misadventures—for this was not the first time the Spaniard had received a note written in green ink; but, for fifteen years, they had occurred at regular intervals, and at various places in the United States, their contents being pretty much the same.

But it would appear that Cortez had attempted to elude these hidden enemies lately, and the letter in familiar ink was to warn him of the failure of his plan. What that plan was will be developed, with other important features, during the progress of our work.

We follow Cortez Mendoza.

He had no sooner reached the hallway, near the door of the hotel, than he paused short, and exclaimed:

"Malediction! look!"

For directly in front of him was the small man who wore a cap, who had first delivered the note to Farak, and afterward stared at Cortez as the latter sat sucking his punch at the restaurant.

As soon as he saw the Spaniard had noticed him, the mysterious individual wheeled about and vanished.

Cortez dashed after him, venting an oath; but the object of his pursuit escaped him.

"Caramba!" he growled. "If I once get him in my grip, I shall tear him to pieces! In New Orleans I was watched by a man—a very tall man; now I am dogged by a very small man, thin, with gray eyes, and—malediction!—who wears a cap. I must get rid of the small one as I did of the large one. Let me catch him once! Ho, there! driver? 47—where are you?"

"Here, sir?"

The cab which Farak had secured was speeding away westward from the Girard House, and Cortez Mendoza sat inside the vehicle, his face set in a sinister expression, which the continuous lightning-glare discovered.

The rain poured like a great torrent on the streets; the war of the elements seemed gathering fresher force each moment.

But the cab rolled on through it all; for Cortez had agreed on a liberal fee to tempt the driver into a hazardous service that defied the following gale.

Dismissing the cabman at the residence of Helene Cerby, Cortez runc the bell and stood close inside the door-frame, out of the drenching rain.

"This storm will soon pass over," he thought aloud, "else I would pay thatascal of a cabman fifty dollars to come back after me. Malediction! have they gone to sleep here? They shall tell me in, if I must break the door down!"

"Clang! clang! sounded the gong-bell, as he gave the knob another wrenching jerk. Being shown into the parlor, he seated himself and took a survey of his surroundings—twirling his mustache, and darting glances here and there, while he grinned forebodingly.

When Helene entered, he did not rise. He twisted and dragged the harder on the ends of his long mustache, alternately, with one hand; he contemplated her steadily, smiling grimly—a keen look, and a sardonic expression in his face; then crossed his limbs and swung one foot slowly inward and outward.

Helene's bright eyes flashed back his gaze; and it was plain that his presence was distasteful to her, for her cheeks were crimsoned, and her pearly teeth were clinched, as if to keep back an outburst of passion and resentment that was rising to her lips.

"Cortez Mendoza," she said, pausing with the utterance of the name.

"Yes, it is Cortez Mendoza," with a spasmodic jerk of the swinging foot.

"Yes," he added, the grin broadening, "it is Cortez Mendoza, come, after fifteen years, through fire, and—malediction!—with the scar of the assassin's knife on his bosom; to get the answer you promised. Your answer, Madame Helene Cerby."

Helene was breathing hard.

(To be continued.)

## Just to Please Grandpa!

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"I CAN'T do it, grandpa, and there isn't the least bit of use talking to me so much about it. I expect I am very naughty, but, dear old grandpa, I won't do it."

Nina Elvin put her bare arms around grandpa Ediston's neck and softly whispered in his ear; and then the old gentleman frowned at what she said, and removed her clinging arms.

"And why won't you do it? Just tell me, if you can, what there is so terribly objectionable in what I have proposed?"

"Oh, grandpa, can't you see how distressing it would be to me to be obliged to meet Ernest Ediston, and both of us be thinking all the time—so that's the one I'm to marry, is it, will she, will she?" Oh, grandpa! I wouldn't do it for the world!"

A charmingly indignant flush began to redden on Nina's cheek, so round and fair, and in her big brown eyes gathered a warning gleam, that made her so like the Elvins, everybody said.

And she had inherited the two specialties that marked the Elvins—a willfulness that people generally did not particularly care to arouse, and a peculiarly charming way, added to a sweet, frank merriment that made her a universal favorite, from grandpa Ediston, down.

And she was prime favorite, too, with him, if he did pretty often come off *hors du combat* in a wordy encounter with pretty, willful Nina—a result that seemed imminent just at present.

And all on account of Ernest Ediston and Nina Elvin—these two second cousins whom grandpa Ediston was determined to have married, and whom—hereby hangs the tale—stubborn Nina was more determined should not be married.

"The idea!" she began, as she crossed the massive waves of his white hair, and still in her tones lurked a biting sarcasm

she knew he must understand and appreciate; "why, grandpa, can it be possible you wish to force me upon a man I never have seen, of whose tastes and habits I am in total ignorance? Why, it seems to me very far beneath the dignity of an Ediston or an Elvin to attempt to take their children, like goods, to market."

Mr. Ediston winced, then bit his lip, half-angrily—with that certain kind of temper people have a habit of feeling when they are convinced against their will.

"This is all nonsense, Nina, sheer nonsense! all mawkish sentiment! I know that my grandson, Ernest, is a thorough gentleman, a scholar, possessed of ample means, a true Ediston in looks, manners, life, besides being five years older than you, and disposed to favor my plans. What more could you, or any sensible girl, want?"

He looked quite fiercely at Nina, who smiled away the snap in his eyes.

"Possibly less would answer, my dear grandpa, only I intend to select my own husband. Now—don't be vexed—now, I am going to pack my trunk and go away to—well, somewhere on a visit."

"Simply because Ernest Ediston is coming for a fortnight's visit here?" and the old gentleman's voice waxed loud and wrath.

"Exactly. You'll kiss me good-by?"

"Never—neither good-by or h'd'ye do—if you deliberately upset my plans so—unless you come back Ernest's betrothed."

Nina's laugh rung out, loud and sweet; then a serious look came over her face, that grew to actual pain.

"Oh, grandpa! you don't mean that?"

"Just that, you willful Elvin, you!"

Her scarlet lips quivered the merest trifle; and then came that brave light in her brown eyes.

"Very well. Good-by, grandpa. I am going to sister Amy's."

Ernest—so you're off? Well, I wish you God-speed."

"And success?"

Ernest Ediston looked up from the portmanteau he had just locked, and laughed as he swung it over his shoulder.

"If you desire to succeed, I hope you will, of course. What did you say her name was?"

"You rogue! When did I ever mention 'her' name to you? But, seriously, I am not so anxious to 'succeed.' The truth is, I am going to please grandfather more than anything else."

Ernest lighted his cigar, adjusted his traveling-cap over his short hair, and sauntered toward the door.

Tell Lou I may be home in a day, or a month, will you, Bert?" I am going down to cousin Amy's for a visit, anyhow. Good-by." And Ernest started off to meet, perforce, his fate.

"He's handsome as a prince, isn't he?"

And Nina Elvin's eyes sparkled as she looked across the room to see what sister Amy would say. And sister Amy's mouth twitched a little, then smiled a little before she answered.

"Who?—oh! you mean the young friend of husband's, who came last night—Mr. Ernest? Yes, I do think he's the finest-looking man I ever saw, always excepting, of course, our cousin Ediston."

A frown puckered up Nina's forehead.

"For pity's sake don't ever mention his name again. I prefer to discuss this visitor of ours; I only am sorry his name happens to be Ernest." But on Nina's cheek a tiny suggestive blush was spreading as she thought how she had dreamed of Mr. Ernest all the night before. Nina wondered if he knew what her name was, and how it would sound from him, for the way in which sister Amy had introduced her—simply "my sister," left Mr. Ernest no opportunity of more than bowing, with a very admiring glance from his eyes. And Mr. Ernest himself? That very noon at the table he declared himself quite plainly when Mr. Colville urged him to promise them a long visit.

"Well, Gus," he returned, laughingly, "I will confess I want to remain rather than go on the errand I have in view. Can you imagine how I must feel, thinking that Miss Nina Elvin is waiting for me at grandfather's house, to come and ask her to marry me?"

He looked askance at the girl opposite him at table, and to his surprise, her face suddenly crimsoned painfully, and she looked first at him, then at sister Amy, and then the tears filled her eyes.

He caught only a glimpse of her emotion, for she darted out of the room like a flash. He turned inquiringly to Mr. Colville.

"What does it mean?"

"Only—she is Nina Elvin, that's all."

Ernest sprung from his chair:

"And I have insulted her! Gus, that was mean in you to deceive us so! Where is she, that I may apologize, and—"

Mr. Ernest Ediston evidently did "apologize, and—" for, after Nina came down to meet him in the parlor, an hour later, as cold as an iceberg, she went out of it with cheeks flushed like pinks, and the Ediston diamond on her forehead.

Surely the bold lover had "apologized, and—" wooed and won the girl he had started to see—"just to please grandfather."

And grandfather was pleased when Ernest brought Nina home, his betrothed bride.

"I told you it was the only condition," he said, gayly, as he kissed her.

THE ROCK RIDER:

OR,

THE SPIRIT OF THE SIERRA.

A TALE OF THE THREE PARKS.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER.

AUTHOR OF "THE RED HAZAR," "THE KNIGHT OF THE HUBBARD," "DOUBLED-DEATH," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII.

IN THE SIERRA.

The gaunt, somber figure of the Rock Rider, on his tall mule, stood like the genius of the place at the summit of a sharp crag, overlooking one of the loftiest passes in the sierra, the heated air trembling around him as from a furnace. He was watching with his eagle eye the movements of a party of Indians in the pass below him, who advanced slowly, examining the rocks as if tracking some one; and on the point of his lance was the fierce, grim-looking head of the Cheyenne chief, Keche-ah-que-kono.

As he looked down, his face lighted with exultation, and he muttered:

"Keep on, red servants of the evil one, and see how soon ye shall run into the snare that is laid for you! The toils are set, and the hunters are coming. Ye follow but the lure which shall lead you to your destruction. Have ye no ears to hear the horse-hoofs? Be it so. Whom God would kill he hardens in wickedness. Your end approaches. The enemy and the storm are coming alike."

He turned his mule away, and rode along the edge of the crags at a rapid pace, every now and then pausing to look down. The Indians kept on at their task, and soon he perceived a cleft in the sierra, running at right angles to the main pass, toward which they seemed to be tending.

"Whom have they there?" muttered the Rock Rider, to himself, as he trotted on. "Surely they can not have been drawn into such a trap. Yonder ravine ends in a sheer precipice, and if any are in it the savages will have them."

In a moment more he had arrived in front of the opening of the ravine in question, and uttered a low cry of apprehension as he looked.

As he had said, it was a short cleft in the mountains, ending in sheer precipices, and there at the end of it in plain sight, were two figures, a man and a woman, both lying on the ground, some distance apart from each other, apparently asleep.

The Rock Rider from his lofty station could see them plainly, but he noticed that a pile of rocks lay in front of them, which would no doubt shield them from the view of any one on the same level.

In front of the rocks, lying down, was a small animal, that his quick glance at once recognized as little Yakop, Brinkerhoff's dog.

"Merciful heavens!" muttered the Rock Rider, to himself, "they never reached the camp!"

He looked back at the Indians and saw that they were still some distance down the pass, slowly but surely advancing. He dismounted from his mule in an instant, and unwrapped from his girdle a long cord, which proved to be nothing but a sling. All his weapons were simple and primitive like himself. Picking up a stone, he placed it in the sling, and cast it with all his might toward the sleeping Brinkerhoff.

The distance was nearly a quarter of a mile, but the cliff was high and the sling strong. The stone dropped with a clatter close to the unconscious German, who started up in a moment.

He saw the Rock Rider when the Indians could not, and when the wild being waved his arms, and pointed down the pass, he seemed to realize the meaning of the warning, for he looked to his arms and took his station behind the pile of rocks immediately.

The Rock Rider made a signal of encouragement, and then mounted his mule again, turned round, and trotted off among the peaks at a fast gait.

He had not far to go.

The summit of the pass was already reached, and he looked down among a wilderness of peaks, through which ran a sort of rule road, traversed for millions of years perhaps by the buffalo in their annual migrations.

At the top of the peak he halted, threw himself to the ground and listened.

"The tramp of horses and the rumble of guns," he muttered. "They are close at hand. Can I reach them in time?"

Boom! came the echo of the same gun that had startled Colonel Davis on his road to the rescue, and the Rock Rider started.

"They are attacking the camp again," he muttered. "Do the fools hope to take it, or are the soldiers short of ammunition?"

Then, as he listened again, his face brightened.

"They hear it, too!" he said. "They are trotting."

And indeed, even an ordinary ear might have detected the deep rumble of guns at a gallop, and the rapid tramp, tramp of the trotting cavalry.

The Rock Rider leaped up and eagerly scanned the wilderness of the sierra in his front. Soon he began to distinguish a white cloud of dust rising between two of the peaks far ahead.

He shook the rein of his mule and went off at a keen gallop among the rocks, down places where it seemed impossible to find a footing, till he finally stood in the midst of the great natural road that connected the Three Parks. Away he went then at a gallop, the trotting of the cavalry becoming plainer every moment, till all on a sudden they burst out of the pass ahead, and came into full sight, their weapons glittering out of the cloud of dust.

The Rock Rider uttered a shout of joy, and put his mule down to his steady trot of twenty miles an hour, at which he dashed up to the column, with his lance up.

They did not seem to be surprised to see him, for not a man stirred out of the ranks to meet the strange figure, till he had abruptly halted in front of them, when Colonel Davis raised his saber, and shouted:

"Halt!"

Then the Rock Rider slowly advanced, an expression of wonder and doubt on his face. He seemed to be half-puzzled, half-disappointed at something.

He threw his lance behind his back, letting it hang on the sling, the grinning head still poised aloft, and abruptly demanded:

"What troops are these?"

To Buford, who had seen him before, the change in his manner was interesting. From a wild, half-crazed mountaineer he had suddenly been changed to a stiff, soldierly-looking officer, slightly imperious, as one accustomed to command.

Colonel Davis gave a military salute, and answered, as he eyed the other with great curiosity:

"Eighth United States Cavalry."

The Rock Rider repeated the words with an accent of slight wonder.

"Eighth United States? These men regulars? Why, sir, when I left the Second Dragoons years ago, they looked like gentlemen, and these are a parcel of dirty ruffians!"

Colonel Davis laughed.

"I know it, sir, but Captain Beckford of to-day is not the trim Beckford of yore either, is he now?"

\* Let this remark should be deemed out of place, it may be observed that it is couched in the very words of General Phil Kearney, who returned to his old regiment at the beginning of the rebellion, after a long period of peace. The contrast between the neat uniform of past times and the hideous monotony now inflicted on the U. S. troops caused the exclamation. Since the fall of 1872, however, the more hideous features have been abolished and the U. S. uniform restored to decency, Dec. 1st, 1872.

The Rock Rider started and eyed the other sharply.

"Who are you?" he said. "Your face is changed, but I know your voice."

"Have you forgotten Tom Davis, Beckford?" said the other, holding out his hand.

"Forgotten Tom Davis? No," said the Rock Rider, looking hard at him. "But you are not Tom Davis. If you were, you would be younger than I, and you look older."

"Years have passed hardly with me, old friend," said Davis, gravely. "Remember that it is thirteen long years since then. It has turned my hair gray, and yours is as black as ever."

The Rock Rider was about to answer, when the sound of shots in rapid succession from among the cliffs in the rear startled both of them. Then he suddenly threw forward his spear, and, with an abrupt toss, sent the head of Keche-ah-que-kono flying among the rocks, when he wheeled round.

"Tom Davis," he shouted, "if it be you, indeed, follow me! Your daughter is in danger, not a mile away. You lost me nine thirteen years ago. Try to save your own now."

And away he went, at full speed, toward the distant firing, with his lance couched straight in front of him.

The father needed no second invitation. He shouted out:

"Column forward! gallop! March!"

Then, with a rush like a whirlwind, away went the whole column of horse, while the black, spiteful-looking carbines were thrown forward by every man, and eager eyes were fixed on the pass.

Somers and Buford, on their swift thoroughbreds, were far ahead of the column by this time, and shot by the tall mule of the Rock Rider with ease, swift though she was.

In a very few minutes they had clattered up to the mouth of the pass from whence the shots proceeded, and wheeled inward. The ravine was full of shouting, shooting savages, galloping to and fro, yelling, but yet held at bay by the determination of a single man, Carl Brinkerhoff, who was firing from his shelter right and left into them.

The appearance of Somers and Buford put a new face on matters as they galloped in. The Indians, taken by surprise, wavered and faltered, and the moment was sufficient to bring the dreaded Rock Rider among them.

He came with his sharp lance aimed at the faces of the warriors, who all dodged it in terror, but that lance was too skillfully wielded to miss its aim, and for a few moments the savages were huddled in the saddle.

And then, with a mighty shout of vengeance and triumph, the dragoons came sweeping into the defile, and the Indians, hemmed in and overpowered, threw down their arms in all directions.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE LAST CHARGE.

THE sun was hanging only a little distance above the western peaks of the Sierra, and the air was hot and sultry, ominous of approaching tempests, when Gustave Belcour emerged from the shelter of the mountains and checked his horse with a word, at the entrance of the South Park.

He had lost his way in the mountains and wandered about, till chance had brought him to the Wolf's Mouth Pass, at whose entrance the contest had taken place two days before.

The little corral of wagons remained just where it had been first hurriedly formed at the close of that attack, not two hundred yards from the mouth of the pass, and in full sight of a glittering pool of water, which only mocked the sufferings of the unhappy soldiers. Twice had they attempted to reach that water in their desperation, only to be driven back to their shelter by the overwhelming numbers of their foes.

Belcour noticed that, with fiendish ingenuity, the besiegers, while maintaining a close blockade of the camp, carefully left the way open to the tantalizing pool. It seemed as if a rush there might easily succeed, and yet they could not see me," he muttered, "they would never think of searching this pass. I wonder whether Somers and Buford got clear through, and where they are now. If they are coming, they must needs be near by this time. Messieurs, stay where you are but a little longer, and you will get all you want, if the American soldiers are what they used to be when I saw them last year."

Like his friends, Gustave had been an officer of the Union Army, and trusted in his prowess against innumerable Indians.

While he looked, a long shadow swept across the valley, as the sun dipped the edge of his disk behind one of the western peaks of the Sierra.

That shadow seemed to be the signal for the Indians to move. Those who had been standing by their horses instantly mounted, and a furious fusillade was opened on the camp, under cover of which a cloud of warriors swept down on the beleaguered soldiers.

At the head of the storming-party Belcour recognized the burly form and scarlet plumes of Cochise, who led in person.

The attack was made with a reckless desperation such as Indians seldom exhibit. It seemed as if they knew that the chances of a rescue increased every moment they delayed, and were determined to capture the train with its valuable freight before the rescue-party should arrive.

Belcour watched with intense anxiety the fortunes of the little party, for he knew that on their salvation probably depended his own safety. Nothing had prevented the Indians separating to scour the mountains in search of the fugitives but the superior attractions of the valley.

He saw them dash forward up to the very wagons, firing and yelling, and noticed with dismay that the answering fire was of the feeblest description.

Had he known that the defenders of the corral were to a man fainting with thirst, and so weak as to be unable to fire without a rest, he would not have wondered. And as the attack commenced the sun set.

Already Cochise was hacking away with

his saber at a cord which united two of the wagons, and a crowd of dark figures was clustered around the corral, when the young conjuror heard the quick gallop of a horse's feet in the pass behind him. Instantly he started round, expecting to see an Indian, and instead of it beheld the well-known figure of the Rock Rider, dark and fierce-looking in the rapidly gathering shades of night.

He was mounted on his tall mule, which was all covered with foam, and he waved his lance impatiently as he drew up beside Belcour.

"What do you here?" he asked, angrily. "Why stand gazing when every arm and heart is needed in yonder melee? Help is coming, sir, and every moment is precious. Follow me, and I will show you what a Christian knight can do against a million of heathens."

Without another word, he turned and plunged into the valley, shouting:

"God and the saints for the Rock Rider! Down with the heathens!"

Belcour hesitated but a moment, and then he drew his pistols.

"I can but die once," he muttered; and down he galloped into the thickening fray, just as a crash announced that a wagon had been overturned, and as the brief twilight ceased as suddenly as if a pall had dropped over the earth.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE FIRE SPIRIT.

IN that tranquil valley the confusion was fearful around the overturned wagon, when sudden darkness which fell over the earth was ominous, for a huge black cloud had risen almost at the moment of sunset, with a suddenness born of the sweeping mountain tempest. The day had been hot and sultry, and now the rumble of thunder and the dismal howling of a storm-gust rose in the western passes, while the black cloud rushed out over the sky with the speed of a whirlwind.

Gustave Belcour found himself tearing down upon the Indians, and he waved his hand, perfectly regardless of the rashness of the deed, and only inspired by the heroic daring of the Rock Rider, the mad Captain Beckford of Davis' story.

With all the fearlessness of mania, that single man plunged into the midst of the dark, struggling mass of combatants, the long lance dashing its keen point here and there, while the wild war-cry rang forth:

"God and the saints for the Rock Rider!"

Then Belcour was into the midst of them himself. Belcour rearing and plunging, kicking and biting, while Gustave scattered the shots of his revolver in all directions.

He was sensible of a terrible commotion, wherein he could hardly tell who was getting the best of the battle. He felt himself struck in the body on the secret cuirass, which had saved his life so often, and reeled upon his charger under the severe blows.

He saw the mad captain, his lance broken, laying about him fiercely with the shattered staff, the Indians bearing back from his tremendous blows.

And then, all at once, a broad glare of red flame lighted up the whole valley, and he saw the faces of his painted antagonists as plain as by daylight. But the Indians looked frightened and overcome with awe at the great light. As if by magic, the firing ceased, and every man looked up to the eastern sierra, whence the light proceeded.

The sight that met their view was perfectly astounding.

The black cloud had covered the whole of the sky with its inky pall, the wind had hushed for a few moments, and a dead silence, oppressive and awful, reigned over every thing, save for a low, far-off moaning in the gorges.

From the mouth of that very gorge where he had first seen the white figure with the horned head-dress, a great sheet of red flame proceeded.

It was kindled in two huge fires, one on each cliff that formed the sides of the gorge, which overhung the very spot on which they were fighting a moment before.

Out in the full light of the flame stood two human figures, the one a man, with a great white beard, the other a girl, with long golden hair, and both wore the same fantastic garb, with the curving horns of the abasas on their heads.







## THE LIGHTNING-ROD MAN.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

He came to me one summer day,  
I thought him rather odd,  
His talk it seemed to stretch a mile,  
Yet 'twas about a rod.  
He had a very pretty tongue,  
It ran by lightning too,  
And there was thunder in his tones  
Which struck me as quite true.  
He wished to put them on my house  
To save me from the shock  
Of lightning, and to keep away  
The thieves who'd pick my lock.  
He said they'd keep the small-pox off  
And purify the air,  
And said 'twould be a splendid thing  
To have one here and there.  
At last I said, "Go put them up,"  
Convinced that he was right,  
And then to town I rode to pass  
The next day and the night.  
When I returned, I found my house  
Covered with iron bands,  
My roof it had as many spikes,  
Indeed, as old Milan's.  
Upon the ridges of the roof  
He had put half a score;  
On every corner there were two,  
And to each chimney four.  
They looked like grape-vines round the house  
So thick they were entwined,  
They ran across the windows, and  
Quite answered for a blind.  
I took that wondrous man aside—  
Said I, "My earnest friend,  
You've got my house all covered o'er  
With rods without an end;  
I think you've got them rather thick,  
The house is far too small,  
I'd better build it larger, so  
That it will hold them all;  
There won't be any lightning left  
The country to supply;  
Must half the rods upon that house  
Point idly to the sky?  
Those rods will gather every bolt  
There is in Christendom—  
Now don't you think I'll be obliged  
To advertise for some?"  
He leaned against the garden fence  
Quite rapt in studious thought;  
"To tell the honest truth," said he,  
"It seems to me you ought."  
Just then I happened to look round,  
And what should meet my view,  
But two rods on the chicken-coop,  
And on the pig-pen two?  
I also saw that he had gone  
And put one on the pump!  
And one on every gateway post,  
And one on every stump!  
And then, as he had put his rods  
Upon every thing that reached,  
He'd stuck poles all about the yard,  
And put a rod on each.  
I killed that fellow then and there  
As I would kill a flea;  
The verdict of the jury was,  
"Murder in no degree."  
I buried him, and lightning rods  
Put at his feet and head,  
And lightning strikes his grave each day  
And makes him still more dead.

Jed Coffin's Revenge.  
A TRUE STORY OF 1812.

BY LAUNCE PONTZ.

WHEN the schooner Reprisal sailed out of Boston harbor to cruise against the British, many people thought her owner was mad. Most, even of the sanguine kind, shook their heads, and "guessed Joe Macy would never see that money ag'in," meaning the cash invested in the Reprisal. And yet Joe Macy had always been lucky in his ventures, so far. An old sealing skipper, he had discovered larger herds, tried out more "ile," and brought home heavier cargoes of skins than any other man from "The Vineyard." What was it made every one shake their heads, when the retired skipper took a sudden dash into business at seventy-six, and bought the Reprisal, to be used as a privateer? Simply that Boston harbor was blockaded, and a fleet of the fastest frigates in the British navy was waiting outside to snap up any thing trying to escape.

"What kin a little hooker like that do if a frigate gets her under her lee in heavy weather?" said one wise old sailor of the croaker order. "Why, she ain't no bigger'n a mejum-sized jolly-boat, and it'll take her all day to travel up and down the waves, when 'other one's a-cuttin' 'em to smash."

Now this was an exaggeration, as the speaker knew. The Reprisal measured a hundred and sixty tons, and carried a pair of sticks in her big enough for a corvette. No one knew any thing of her sailing powers, for she was only just built, and by a new man, a youngster in the trade, full of new-fangled notions.

"Fine of notation, amount of displacement, lines of least resistance! Git out!" said the before mentioned oracle, in reply to a timid explanation from the modest young ship-builder, who had listened to the other's caustic remarks for some time. "Man and boy, I've fattered the seas for nigh on fifty year, and I never heard on 'em. I say the hooker's overmasted, and she'll go to eternal smash if it comes on to blow."

The speaker was interrupted by a nasal voice, and turning round, beheld a tall, raw-boned sailor, with a shrewd, Yankee face, and an appearance of great keenness and resolution.

"Say, shipmate," said the individual, "no one's asking you to go to sea in this here barky, which, to my mind's as sweet a little piece o' white-oak and locust as a feller need step on. I ain't axed your opinion myself, and seein' I'm skipper o' this here, p'raps you'll take your ugly, Job's-comforter-mug to glower at some one else's craft. Hey?"

"And who be you?" demanded Growler.

"I be Captain Jedediah Coffin, what went into Tripoli with Decatur, if you want to know. So now travel."

And Growler complied with the request, not over-graciously, but the fact was, that the captain's fist looked uncommonly large and bony, and "Jed Coffin" was well known by reputation in Boston as the sailor who had saved Decatur's life at Tripoli, ten years before, by cutting down three Turks single-handed.

And thus it became spread about the town that old Macy had engaged "Sarey Jed Coffin" to command his schooner, and people said 'twas all one—she was bound to be a coffin for some, anyhow.

So thought not Jedediah himself, as he went up to the owner's house to report his vessel fitted out, and take the final orders of the wary old sealer.

"Cap. Macy to hum?" he inquired of the smart girl who opened the door. For answer the girl surveyed his figure somewhat pertly, turned up her nose, and observed:

"What do you want of him, young man? He ain't used to having common sailors come here after him. He's got an office and a book-keeper for sich."

Jed Coffin closed one eye, and expected over the area railings before he made answer:

"Is Cap. Macy to hum, Susan Jane, or ain't he? You hain't told me yet." "No, he ain't," said the damsel, shortly. "Then I guess I'll just walk in and wait for him," said Jed, coolly; and before the girl could interpose an objection, he had thrown his quid into the street, stalked past her without saying a word, and entered the handsome drawing-room.

The maid followed him, aghast, to recall him, but Jed had already "brought to, all standing," as he subsequently expressed it; for before him stood a very beautiful and fashionable young lady, who addressed him as if she had known him all her life.

"This is Captain Coffin, I know, for papa has often described you to me. Tell me truly, do you think that you will be able to take the schooner to sea past the British? Papa says he believes in your ability; but isn't it frightfully risky?"

As she spoke, this gracious divinity waved her hand toward a chair, and sunk down herself on a luxurious couch. Jed Coffin, for the first time in his life, looked awkward, as he obeyed the gesture. His attitude expressed a strong sense of being there on sufferance, as he sat down on the very edge of the chair, under which he dropped his hat, and nervously grasping his knees with his huge brawny hands, answered the young lady's question.

"Yes, Miss, it are risky, but the little hooker'll scrape through ef we hev to run gunnel under the hull trip, and she kin do it, tu. That 'ere schooner, Miss, are a reg'lar sneezer to go, and kerries a mainsail like a frigate's courses, she du. We'll git out, Miss, never you fear, and ef we don't bring in a few o' them pesky West-Indiamen, why you may chaw up Jed Coffin for a damner!" And the rough sailor pulled up short, for his enthusiasm for his beloved craft was betraying him into language he instinctively felt unsuited to the locality.

Marion Macy smiled. The sailor, with his naïf way of talking, was a new experience to her, fresh from a fashionable school. But as the oldest and wisest of sailors is but clay in the hands of the youngest of school-



girls, the little minx artfully continued the conversation, removing the sailor's bashfulness by degrees, and drawing him on to talk, till Jed Coffin found himself telling her all his past life, with its strong spice of adventurous stories, as freely as if he were spinning yarns in the old forecastle of former years. When Captain Macy entered the room, an hour after, he found the new commander quite at home, while Marion was laughing heartily at one of his dry stories. And then the old sailor pulled up, quite stiffly, for although Jed Coffin was good enough to command the Reprisal, and cruise after the prize-money for the old man's benefit, Macy was absurdly jealous of his daughter, and quite determined on her marriage with young Mr. Gerry, of New York, whose father was "one of the signers, you know. No better family."

So Captain Macy chose to fancy that rough Jed Coffin was too presuming with his daughter, and he cut the interview short very ungraciously, giving Coffin his orders before Marion as master to servant, a tone the independent sailor would not have brooked had the captain been younger. As it was, he turned stiff in his own turn, and when the captain intimated to him that on his return from the voyage he could report at the office, "and not here on any account," Jed replied, very quietly:

"You needn't be afeared, Cap; I ain't one to take liberties, when I'm told I ain't welcome, kinder plainly. Ef I come back at all, maybe what I'll bring won't be above sneezin' at. Good-by, Cap. Good-by, Miss Marion."

And as he was going out, much hurt at his employer's sudden rudeness, Marion ran forward and whispered:

"Don't mind papa. He's as cross as a bear, to-day. I'll see you when you come back. So mind you come."

And didn't Miss Marion get a good wiggling for that speech? But to all her father's scolding she only replied:

"All right, papa. You know what girls are. You've taken the wrong way with me. I can tell you."

And further explanation she would not vouchsafe, till the Reprisal was out of the harbor, and under fire of the whole blockaded fleet, which was next day.

Then she told her father, to his great amazement:

"Father, if the Reprisal goes down, I'll die an old maid."

Among the Alaska rivers are the Atunacoolakuchagut, Nocotachigut, Kuyuyukut, Connecovah, Unalacchut and Golsova-Richka, along whose banks live in almost Arcadian bliss the Cuyekanikpuk, Yakutskiyimik, Sakiniskiyimik, Anka-chagumik, Moktonocutcozorts, and other tribes with equally simple and appropriate nomenclatures.

## A Decided Mistake.

BY JOHN D. RYAN.

"Now I am in for it," thought Jack Stanley, as he slowly descended the steps of his boarding-house. "Nice fix this, truly—dead broke and turned out. I wonder what good Samaritan will shelter me to-night!"

He buttoned his coat closely around him, for it was a raw, blustering night in November, and with an expression half-rueful, half-comical, upon his handsome face, he took his way down the street.

The young gentleman with whose soliloquy our story opens had but lately arrived in the metropolis, in search of fame and fortune. With a light heart and a lighter purse, he had looked diligently for an opening, but fortune, the changeable dame, would not smile upon him, and he had been unsuccessful.

And now, his landlady's dues not being forthcoming, that uncompromising functionary had given him notice that his company could be dispensed with. In short, she had turned him out.

Fortunately, Jack's was a spirit not easily cast down. Possessing educational health and plenty of energy, he had no fears for the result, and he could not suppress a laugh at the position in which he found himself.

Wandering aimlessly along, he arrived in front of one of the great hotels, and, for want of something better to do, paused at the entrance to watch the gay throngs which kept passing to and fro.

Suddenly a hand was laid upon his arm. Turning around, he confronted a spruce-looking little man, with a yellow face and twinkling black eyes, who exclaimed, hurriedly:

"On time, I see, but you are none too early. Our little affair is all arranged, and—"

"I fear you are mistaken, my friend," interrupted Jack.

"Am I?" returned the little man, with a sly chuckle; "I'll wager you a dozen of wine that it is as I say. Come—we must be moving."



"I'm not so sure of that," muttered Jack. "However, as you seem so anxious for my company, it would be cruel to disappoint you. So here goes," and he hastened after his conductor, who, in his eagerness, was already several steps in advance.

It was ticklish business getting rid of old Barker, resumed the little man as Jack rejoined him, "but we finally succeeded in getting him off without exciting his suspicion, and in another hour you'll be the happiest man in New York!"

"Heaven be praised!" ejaculated Jack, with inward fervor. "A minute ago I would have changed places with a ragpicker."

"Lucy will be a little offish, of course," continued his companion, "only natural under the circumstances. But, screw your courage well up, my boy, and the day is yours. Remember the prize at stake," and he poked a finger into Jack's ribs and grinned, knowingly.

"A lady in the game!" thought Jack, pricking up his ears. "This smacks of romance! I scent an adventure!"

"Never fear for me," he replied. "I'll be as bold as a dozen lions."

"I'm sure you will," returned the little man, "and who wouldn't for such a prize?" A brisk walk of a few minutes, during which time our hero's garrulous companion kept up a continual stream of talk, brought them to a fine house in an aristocratic quarter. The guide mounted the steps and rung the bell. With a few extra beats of the heart, Jack followed.

The door opened, and they were ushered through a spacious, well-lighted hall into a richly-furnished apartment.

"Spirits of impudence," invoked Jack, as he seated himself, "I conjure you! Without your assistance I must certainly make a great ass of myself."

"Now compose yourself, my dear young friend," said the little man, rubbing his hands cheerfully, "and I will go and acquaint your uncle George of your arrival."

He opened the door softly and was gone. But very little time was given Jack to act upon his kindly advice, however. Almost immediately the door reopened, and a portly old gentleman appeared upon the scene.

"Welcome, my dear Tom, welcome!" he cried, advancing with outstretched hand.

"And how do you find yourself to-night?" "As well as usual, I believe, sir," responded Jack, shaking the proffered member heartily. "A little nervous, perhaps—"

"A little nervous, of course," broke in the old gentleman, laughing heartily. "But, mercy on me, how deep your voice is! Have you taken cold?"

"I believe I did catch a trifling cold last evening," answered Jack, rather embarrassed.

"Tw'll soon mend," cried his companion, gayly, "when you have a handsome young wife to nurse you."

"Gracious powers!" muttered Jack, "where will this end?"

"But, you are wasting time with an old foggy like me," continued the other. "Lucy is alone in her apartment, and wondering, no doubt, at your tardiness. Come! I will escort you as far as her door."

"With all my heart," responded Jack, inwardly wishing himself in China. "How has the fair Lucy passed the day?"

"In trying to make herself miserable," was the rather gruff reply. "I depend upon you to cure her of that."

They paused before a door, and the old gentleman knocked. Receiving no reply, he boldly opened it, and gently pushing Jack in, reclosed it.

To the latter's dismay, he beheld sitting before him a lady, young, richly-dressed, and very beautiful.

"I most humbly beg your pardon, Miss," he commenced, "for presuming to intrude myself into your presence, for the whole affair has been so sudden and confused that I can hardly explain, even to myself, why I am here. I trust—"

"Oh, sir!" interrupted the lady, rising from her seat, while the expression of aversion upon her beautiful features gave place to one of hope, "you are not the person I expected and dreaded to see. Perhaps a merciful Providence has guided you here to save me from a most odious fate—that of marrying a man I detest!"

"My services are at your disposal," returned Jack, earnestly. "Heart and soul you may command me."

"Pray be seated," said the lady, with increasing agitation, "and tell me how you came here."

Accepting her invitation, Jack briefly and honestly related the story as detailed above.

"I see it all!" exclaimed his fair companion. "You have been mistaken for the nephew of my guardian, a wild and dissipated young man, who ran away from home when scarcely more than a boy, and returned only two days since. Unfortunately, I am rich, and my guardian, who seems to have a strong affection for his nephew, despite his evil ways, sees an excellent opportunity to reform him, and—"

"I was raised in opulence, but I moved away from there long since."

JONES, who pointed an empty pistol at his wife, is sorry now that he did it.

A QUOTE of paper should sing nothing but sheet-music.

CAN people at a distance be near-sighted? I think not, by a far sight.

MANY men measure more by the two-foot rule than they do when measured by the golden rule.

THE site of Pittsburgh was once sold for a fiddle, which was better than selling it for a song.

THE last fish I caught measured fully three feet from the tip of its nose to the shore; you can imagine what a whale he was.

I HAVE noticed that my books which go without leave of absence generally return with a good many leaves of absence, and I am compelled to turn a new page.

WE have organized a Centennial club to celebrate the two thousandth anniversary of the Christian era. We expect to do it in style.

WHEN I look out through my crooked pane I see passers-by in grotesque shapes, and it is fun; but the trouble is they look in and see me the same.

BOBBS complained to his butcher for giving him short weight; the butcher replied that he had to give him short weight to counterbalance his long wait.

THE first time I began to lay up money I bought a ten-cent money-box and put five cents in it, and I had to work nearly all the next day to get it out again. I got discouraged and gave it up.

BROWN came near losing his head the other day; he laid it on a pillow to go to sleep, and got up and walked away without it. He discovered his mistake when he went to get a drink.

GET an education. Even an educated man sometimes stands a chance of going to Congress, or of becoming a lawyer, or a preacher; such things have happened, as you may have heard your grandfathers say.

SOME people despise to work. Pshaw! if I could do nothing for the first six months of the year I would be perfectly willing to exert myself to the utmost to rest the balance of the year.

OVER one hundred criminals were recently beheaded in India. They are not served so in this country, as it has a tendency to unfit them for further usefulness. It is hard to get ahead of them.

A RICH man's burden of care is his riches. I am so kind-hearted that I believe I could cheerfully fulfill scripture, forsake the pleasures of poverty and help to share his burden. I am not always so charitable, but in a case of this kind I think I could be easily persuaded to relieve him of his care.

IF a ninety-pound boy steals a ten-pound ham of me, at the rate of twenty cents a mile, and I slide toward the boy with velocious velocity, and grab him to make him stop and take breath, how much bigger than the boy will the ham be after I have had control of him for ten minutes—provided he doesn't eat the ham upon the road?

TENDER hands should wear seven-der gloves. There, now, I got that at last. I only worked two days on that joke, and just as like as not somebody will step in and claim it, just as they did when I wrote Beautiful Snow, Rock Me to Sleep, Paradise Lost and Robinson Crusoe. There are lots of points in that joke besides the points of the compass, West Point, points of the law, and the point of observation.

A MAN ran down-street so recklessly the other day that he got his left foot tangled in his ear, and his right foot caught in the collar of his coat, and he ran a whole square in this manner before he could stop to see what was the matter, and then he found that his back-bone was shoved up into the crown of his hat, and his chin was discovered in his coat-tail pocket. They had to melt him down and run him over again before they could make half a man of him.

A sharp rap sounded upon the door, and the old gentleman reappeared.

"The clergyman has arrived," he announced, "and is waiting. I hope, Miss, you have made up your mind that this step is for your good."

Lucy arose resignedly, and gave her arm to Jack. They were speedily in the presence of the man of God, and the solemn words which made them one were spoken.

But hardly had the ceremony been concluded, when the door-bell was pulled with